

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

OPEN BORDER



A Turkish and a Palestinian flag are seen on a pole as Palestinians walk at the Gaza City port, Monday June 7, 2010. The Israeli navy killed four Palestinian militants in diver suits off the coast of Gaza before dawn Monday, the Israeli military and Palestinian officials said.

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SPORTS NEWS

GRAYT EIGHT



Boston Celtics guard Ray Allen makes a finals-record eighth 3-point shot of the game, against the Los Angeles Lakers during the second half of Game 2 of the NBA basketball finals Sunday, June 6, 2010, in Los Angeles.

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In this March 30, 2010 file photo, Helen Thomas sits next to Bill Plante of CBS in the East Room of the White House in Washington. Thomas abruptly retired Monday, according to her employer, Hearst News Service.

Associated Press

White House criticizes Thomas for Israel remarks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Longtime Washington journalist Helen Thomas abruptly retired Monday as a columnist for Hearst News Service following remarks she made about Israel that were denounced by the White House and her press corps colleagues.

The 89-year-old Thomas, dean of the White House press corps, has been a long-time fixture in Washington and has been lauded as a pioneering journalist who has covered presidents since 1960.

Known for her confrontational questioning, Thomas apologized for comments that were captured on video and have spread widely on the Internet. On the May 27 video, Thomas says Israelis should "get the hell out of Palestine," suggesting they go to Germany, Poland or the United States.

Continued on Next Page

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OIL SPILL UPDATE



A dead turtle floats on a pool of oil from the Deepwater Horizon spill in Barataria Bay off the coast of Louisiana Monday, June 7, 2010.

Associated Press

Read more on Page A3

10 NATO troopers killed on deadly Afghanistan day



NATO soldiers and policemen examine the damage caused after at least three suicide bombers attacked a police training center in Kandahar, Afghanistan, Monday, June 7, 2010. One of the attackers drove an explosives-laden car up to the gate of the center and detonated the bomb, blowing a hole in the compound wall while two other bombers tried to storm through the hole, engaging in a gunbattle which led to their deaths.

Associated Press

Read Page 6

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Veteran White House journalist Helen Thomas asks a question of President Barack Obama during a news conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington, in this photo taken Thursday, May 27, 2010. Thomas abruptly retired Monday as a columnist for Hearst News Service following remarks she made about Israel that were denounced by the White House and her press corps colleagues.

THOMAS
Continued from Front Page
Hearst announced her retirement, effective immediately, shortly after reprehensible” during his White House press secretary daily briefing with reporters. Robert Gibbs called her Thomas, who has had a front-row seat in the briefing room

Associated Press

for many years, was not present.

The White House Correspondents Association also issued a rare statement, calling her comments “indefensible.”

“Many in our profession who have known Helen for years were saddened by the comments, which were especially unfortunate in light of her role as a trail blazer on the White House beat,” said the statement, signed by journalists who are officers of the association.

Thomas, born in Kentucky of Lebanese immigrant parents, had been scheduled to speak at the June 14 graduation of Walt Whitman High School in the Washington suburb of Bethesda, Maryland, but Principal Alan Goodwin wrote in a Sunday e-mail to students and parents that she was being replaced.

“Graduation celebrations are not the venue for divisiveness,” Goodwin wrote.

Thomas wrote on her website that “I deeply regret my comments I made last week

regarding the Israelis and the Palestinians.”

She added: “They do not reflect my heart-felt belief that peace will come to the Middle East only when all parties recognize the need for mutual respect and tolerance. May that day come soon.”

The national director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham H. Foxman, said Sunday that Thomas’ apology did not go far enough.

“Her suggestion that Israelis should go back to Poland and Germany is bigoted and shows a profound ignorance of history,” Foxman said in a statement. “We believe Thomas needs to make a more forceful and sincere apology for the pain her remarks have caused.”

Thomas, 89, began her long career with the news service United Press International in 1943 and started covering the White House in 1960, according to a biography posted on her website. She became a columnist for Hearst in 2000. □



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Well cap captures more oil, but outlook's gloomy

HARRY R. WEBER
 RAY HENRY

Associated Press Writers

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The cap on the blown-out well in the Gulf is capturing a half-million gallons a day, or anywhere from one-third to three-quarters of the oil spewing from the bottom of the sea, officials said Monday. But the hopeful report was offset by a warning that the farflung slick has broken up into hundreds or even thousands of patches of oil that may inflict damage that could persist for years. Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the government's point man for the crisis, said the breakup has complicated the cleanup.

"Dealing with the oil spill on the surface is going to go on for a couple of months," he said at a briefing in Washington. But "long-term issues of restoring the environment and the habitats and stuff will be years."

Allen said the containment cap that was installed late last week is now collecting about 460,000 gallons of oil a day out of the approximately 600,000 gallons to 1.2 million gallons believed to be spewing from the well a mile underwater.

The amount of oil captured is being slowly ramped up as more vents on the cap are closed. Crews are moving carefully to avoid a dangerous pressure buildup and to prevent the formation of the icy crystals that thwarted a previous effort to contain the leak. The captured oil is being pumped to a ship on the surface.

"I think it's going fairly well," Allen said.

BP said it plans to replace the cap — perhaps later this month or early next month — with a slightly bigger one that will provide a tighter fit and thus collect more oil. It will also be designed to allow the company to suspend the cleanup and then resume it quickly if a hurricane threatens the Gulf later this season. The new cap is still being designed.

"It gives us much better containment than we've got" with the existing cap, said BP senior vice president Kent Wells.

BP and government officials acknowledged it is difficult to say exactly how much oil is spewing from the well, and thus how much is still flowing into the water. BP spokesman Robert Wine said the figures being discussed are estimates, some of which have been provided by the government.

Ed Overton, a Louisiana State University professor of environmental sciences, suggested it is too early for anyone to claim

victory. The spill, estimated at anywhere from 23 million gallons to 50 million gallons, is already the biggest in U.S. history, dwarfing the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska.

"We're hopeful the thing is going to work, but hoping and actually working are two different things," Overton said. "They may have turned the corner, they may not have. We just don't know right now."

He said he doesn't believe BP will have turned the corner until it sees a significant flow from the well stopped. "And it is not entirely obvious to me that that is happening," Overton said.

"I do worry we are not removing as much oil as we ought to be getting," he added.

The "spillcam" video of the leak continued to show a big brown billowing cloud of oil and gas 5,000 feet below the surface.

In Washington, President Barack Obama sought to reassure Americans that "we will get through this crisis."

"This will be contained," he said. "It may take some time, and it's going to take a whole lot of effort. There is going to be damage done to the Gulf Coast, and there is going to be economic damages that we've got to make sure BP is responsible for and compensates people for."

But in a forecast that was by turns hopeful and gloomy, Allen indicated that cleaning up the mess could prove to be more complex than previously thought.

"Because what's happened over the last several weeks, this spill has disaggregated itself," Allen said. "We're no longer dealing with a large, monolithic spill. We're dealing with an aggregation of hundreds or thousands of patches of oil that are going a lot of different directions." When finished, the new cap would be connected a riser pipe floating about 300 feet (91 meters) below the surface. Engineers say the riser would be deep enough to avoid damage from hurricanes that can roar over the Gulf of Mexico, but shallow enough to allow returning drill ships to quickly reconnect to the flow.

Meanwhile, crews worked furiously to skim, scour and chemically disperse the substance from the water.

Tony Wood, the director of the National Spill Control School at Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi, said BP's success at containing some of the leaking oil would not dramatically reduce the amount of time it would take to clean up the Gulf. □



National Incident Commander Adm. Thad Allen speaks during the daily briefing at the White House in Washington, Monday, June 7, 2010.

Associated Press



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President Barack Obama delivers the commencement address for Kalamazoo Central High School, the winner of the 2010 Race to the Top High School Commencement Challenge, at Western Michigan University Arena in Kalamazoo, Mich., Monday, June 7, 2010.

Associated Press

Obama to high school grads: 'Don't make excuses'

DARLENE SUPERVILLE
TIM MARTIN

Associated Press Writers

KALAMAZOO, Michigan (AP) — Don't mimic Washington by making excuses, President Barack Obama advised graduating high school students on Monday night as he urged them to take responsibility for failure as well as success.

In remarks to the senior class of Kalamazoo Central High School, Obama said it's easy to blame others when problems arise.

"We see it every day out in Washington, with folks calling each other names and making all sorts of accusations on TV," the president said. He said the high school students can and have done better than that.

The 1,700-student school in southwest Michigan bested more than 1,000 schools to win a national education competition in which the prize was Obama as graduation speaker — a feat that is not unheard of but is still unusual for a president. The school was among three finalists picked after the public voted on videos and essays submitted by the schools. The White House made the final selection.

The administration cited Kalamazoo Central's 80 percent-plus graduation rate, improvements in academic performance and a culturally rich curriculum.

Obama, who says a better-educated work force will help the U.S. stay competitive globally, said the school had set an example with its level of community and parental involvement and the high standards of its teachers.

"I think that America has a lot to learn from Kalamazoo Central about what makes for a successful school in this new century," he said as some 5,000 people, including the 280 graduates in maroon or white gowns, packed into the basketball arena at Western Michigan University. "It's the key to our future."

"But the most important ingredient is you," Obama said.

He advised the graduates to work hard.

"You could have made excuses — our kids have fewer advantages, our schools have fewer resources, so how can we compete? You could have spent years pointing fingers — blaming parents, blaming teachers, blaming the principal or the superintendent or the government," the president said. "But instead, you came together. You were honest with yourselves about where you were falling short. And you resolved to do better." Obama said he didn't always understand

that excellence comes through perseverance. He talked about his father leaving the family when he was 2, being raised by a single mother, acting too casual about his future and thinking that hard work and responsibility were old-fashioned ideas that didn't pertain to him.

"But after a few years, living solely for my own entertainment wasn't so entertaining anymore and it wasn't particularly satisfying either," he said. "In refusing to apply myself, I didn't have much to show for myself, nothing I could point to that I was proud of."

Obama shook hands and even hugged some of the graduating seniors as they filed across the stage to collect their diplomas.

Education is widely seen as one hope for Michigan's long-struggling economy. The state has had the nation's highest unemployment rate for four consecutive years, including a 14 percent jobless rate in April. Thousands of manufacturing jobs have been lost, many connected to the auto industry, and the state is trying to diversify its economy with alternative energy, biomedical and other jobs — most of which require education beyond high school.

The White House said more than 170,000 people voted in the Race to the Top Commencement Challenge competition. Cincinnati's Clark Montessori Junior High and High School and the Denver School of Science and Technology were the other finalists.

Kalamazoo Central's valedictorian, Cindy Lee, said she was excited but jittery about sharing the stage with Obama.

"The whole school is excited about it. The whole community is excited. It's on the news every single day," Lee, 18, said last week.

Tevyn Grayson, who is finishing up his junior year at Kalamazoo Central and came to watch friends and cousins graduate, said Obama's appearance sends a powerful message to younger students about the importance of education. "I know it must be important for the president to come to our city to give a commencement speech," said Grayson, 17. "There's a lot of pressure to succeed now. Can't be the one to mess it up."

About an hour before the graduates filed into the arena, Obama surprised them by dropping into the recreation center as they got ready for the biggest day of their lives to date.

Walking around with a hand-held microphone, Obama told the students to work hard, keep their eyes on the prize and continue to carry with them a sense of excellence. □

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L.A. haze begins to clear as pot dispensaries close

GREG RISLING,
Associated Press Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP)—Some of the hundreds of medical marijuana dispensaries that proliferated in Los Angeles in recent years began closing Monday, as a new ordinance took effect to help the city keep track of the businesses while pushing them toward industrial areas and away from schools and other public gathering places.

The pot shops flooded the fledgling industry with cash and high-grade pot known as “kush.” Across the city Monday, disgruntled dispensary owners were shutting their doors in fear that they could face civil fines or criminal charges.

City officials believe the new law will slash the number of collectives to somewhere between 70 and 130 while providing stricter guidelines for the ones that remain.

Dan Halbert, who runs Rainforest Collective west of downtown, put a large sign outside his storefront that read, “Hundreds of jobs lost, millions of tax revenues lost, another vacant building in Los Angeles. Drugs back on the street.”

Halbert is part of an ongoing lawsuit to overturn the ordinance. Still, he thought it would be best to shut down until the case gets resolved.

“I didn’t come here to break any laws,” Halbert, 45, said. “We have several thousand patients, who are all very distraught. They don’t know where they are going to go.” It wasn’t immediately known how many pot shops had closed. Authorities intended to take a tally then regroup to determine what enforcement action should be taken. The count could take several weeks.

“We continue to work with the city attorney’s office on establishing an enforcement strategy,” police Capt. Kevin McCarthy said. “The issue at hand is whether to proceed using a criminal, civil or a combined process on the dispensaries that violate the ordinance.”

The doors were locked at American Eagle Collective in

the Eagle Rock area. During a 15 minute span, 10 cars pulled into the mini-mall where it’s located. Several people tried to enter the dispensary, with one throwing up his arms in disgust. They all declined comment.

At the House of Kush, a sign informed clients the business was no longer open. A man wearing a black security shirt said the collective was closed. A number of shops that registered before a 2007 moratorium have six months to prove they meet the new guidelines, which include staying more than 1,000 feet (300 meters) from schools, parks and other public sites and paying an administrative fee of more than \$1,000.

“All of us who chose to play by the rules as laid down by the city have been waiting years for this day,” marijuana collective owner Joao Silverstein said.

Pot shop owner Frank Sheftel walked out of the city clerk’s office, grinning and waving his paperwork in victory as he shook hands with another collective operator.

“There’s a lot of excitement,” he said. “The city is finally putting us in the position that we don’t have to look over our shoulder in fear that the city is going to come close us down.”

There was little disagreement that local government was to blame for the explosion of pot clinics. The City Council struggled for years to devise a law that would provide accessible, affordable medicine for patients while addressing concerns from residents that the clinics were a blight on neighborhoods.

Without a law in place, the number of dispensaries grew from a mere four in 2005 to several hundreds last year. A hardship exemption in the moratorium allowed many of those shops to open.

“It was maddeningly frustrating,” said Michael Larsen, president of the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council, who said there were 21 dispensaries within a 2.5-mile radius. “We would see these pot shops open up left and right with absolutely no

regulations. The frustration was with the council. They had failed in this situation.”

After much debate, which even included the suggestion that the city open its own dispensary, the council approved the ordinance in January.

Halbert said the city hasn’t equally evaluated the dispensaries. He argued that it was unfair to allow some to stay open based simply on a date rather than an examination of whether they were abiding by the law.

“They are drawing an arbitrary line in the sand,” he said. “They are throwing out the good with the bad.” □



“Budista” Angela Nagel takes information from a client at Starbudz medical marijuana dispensary in the North Hollywood district of Los Angeles on May 5, 2010. Los Angeles city officials are attempting to shutter dispensaries that aren’t in compliance with a new ordinance and ensure the roughly 130 that remain meet stringent guidelines.

Associated Press

1 missing after natural gas line blast in Texas



Flames shoot into the air after a natural gas line exploded in Cleburne, Texas, Monday, June 7, 2010.

Associated Press

ANGELA K. BROWN
Associated Press Writer

CLEBURNE, Texas – A large natural gas line in north Texas erupted Monday after utility workers accidentally hit the line, sending a massive fireball into the air and leaving one worker missing hours after the blast, officials said.

Johnson County Emergency Coordinator Jack Snow said searchers were scouring the charred area around the damaged line looking for the missing person. Thirteen other workers who were also at the site were accounted for, and there were no known fatalities, he said. The missing worker had just gotten down from a machine drilling utility pole holes when the line suddenly

exploded. Other workers lost sight of him in the intense smoke, said Roger Harmon, Johnson County’s top elected official. Several workers drove themselves to the hospital before emergency crews arrived, so it’s possible that the missing man left the scene on his own, Harmon said. “I really hope he is at home safe, but we’re still searching,” he said. Laura Harlin, a resident of nearby Granbury, said around the time of the blast she heard a “huge rumbling” that initially sounded like thunder and then like a tornado because it lasted so long. “For about 10 minutes, it was so loud that it was like there was an 18-wheeler rumbling in your driveway,” she said.

The explosion caused confusion among officials in its immediate aftermath, with one city official saying three people had been killed. The official, Cleburne City Manager Chester Nolen, later said that after fire officials and the gas line operator extinguished the fire, he was unsure if anyone was killed. Heat from the blast forced firefighters to stay about a half-mile away until the gas flow was shut off.

“This could have been way worse,” said Brian Fine, the Hood County emergency management coordinator who was assisting with the explosion. At least seven of the workers went to the hospital following the explosion. Gary Marks, CEO of Glen Rose Medical Center, said two people were treated and released, and four others were in stable condition. One patient was taken to Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Fort Worth. Spokeswoman Whitney Jodry did not have person’s condition. The gas line is owned by Houston-based Enterprise Products Partners LP. Spokesman Rick Rainey said Enterprise’s control room immediately identified a break in the line near Cleburne, about 50 miles southwest of Dallas. □

10 NATO troopers killed on deadly Afghanistan day

ROHAN SULLIVAN

Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Ten NATO service members, seven of them American, were killed in separate attacks Monday on the deadliest day of the year for foreign forces in Afghanistan. A U.S. civilian contractor who trains Afghan police also died in a suicide attack.

The bloodshed comes as insurgents step up bombings and other attacks ahead of a major NATO operation in the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar that Washington hopes will turn the tide of the war.

Half the NATO deaths — five Americans — occurred in a single blast in eastern Afghanistan, U.S. spokesman Col. Wayne Shanks said without giving further details. It was a grim reminder that the insurgents can strike throughout the country — not simply in the south, which has become the main focus of the U.S. campaign.

Two other U.S. service members were killed in separate attacks in the south — one in a bombing and the other by small arms fire.

NATO said three other service members were killed in attacks in the east and south but gave no further details. The French government announced that one of the victims was a sergeant in the French Foreign Legion who was killed by a rocket in Kapisa province northeast of Kabul. Three other Legionnaires were wounded.

The American police trainer and a Nepalese security guard were killed when a team of three suicide bombers attacked the main gates of the police training center in the southern city of Kandahar, U.S. officials said.

Afghan officials said one bomber blew a hole in the outer wall, enabling the two others to rush inside, where they were killed in a gunbattle. Afghan officials said three police were wounded.

It was the deadliest day for NATO since Oct. 26, when 11 American troops were killed, including seven who died in a helicopter crash in eastern

Afghanistan. The crash was not believed a result of hostile fire. U.S. commanders have warned of more casualties as the alliance gears up for a major operation to secure Kandahar, the former headquarters of the Taliban and the biggest city in the south with a half million people.

Last December, President Barack Obama ordered 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan to try to stem the rise of the Taliban, who have bounced back since they were ousted from power in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion. Obama has shifted the focus of the U.S. campaign against Islamist terror to Afghanistan from Iraq, where the U.S. is expected to draw down to 50,000 troops by the fall.

As fighting escalates, the Afghan government is reaching out to the insurgents in hopes of ending the nearly nine-year war.

Last week, President Hamid Karzai won endorsement from a national conference, or peace jirga, for his plan to offer economic and other incentives to the militants to lay down their arms, and to seek talks with the Taliban leadership. The leadership has so far publicly shunned the offer, and the U.S. is skeptical whether peace can succeed until the Taliban are weakened on the battlefield.

The Taliban have branded Karzai a U.S. puppet and say there will be no talks while foreign troops are in Afghanistan.

Karzai's decision Sunday to replace two of the country's top security officials fueled speculation about divisions within the Afghan leadership over reaching out to the Taliban. The government said the two officials were replaced because of an armed attack on the peace jirga, which caused no casualties among the delegates but proved embarrassing to the Karzai administration.

Both officials had a long background of opposition to the Taliban. Intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh was a senior figure in the Northern Alliance, which helped the U.S. oust the Taliban regime in 2001. Interior Minister

Hanif Atmar served in Afghanistan's Communist-era intelligence agency and fought mujahedeen opposed to the Soviet occupation.

In the wake of the shake-up, members of the former alliance, made up mostly of northern ethnic minorities, speculated that the changes were political and would weaken the security services at a key moment in the war.

"I would say it's a hasty and irrational decision by a president of Afghanistan who has deprived his own government of professional capacity to combat the insurgency," said Abdullah Abdullah, a key Northern Alliance leader and former foreign minister.

"The only party that will benefit is the Taliban," Abdullah, who lost to Karzai in last year's fraud-marred presidential election, told The Associated Press.

Karzai's spokesman, Waheed Omar, insisted the security lapse was the only reason for the resignations.

"This could have been national chaos, a national



NATO soldiers block parts of a road to secure an area adjacent to a police training center after at least three suicide bombers attacked the training center in Kandahar, Afghanistan, Monday, June 7, 2010. One of the attackers drove an explosives-laden car up to the gate of the center and detonated the bomb, blowing a hole in the compound wall while two other bombers tried to storm through the hole, engaging in a gunbattle which led to their deaths.

Associated Press

crisis," Omar told reporters of the jirga attack. "Somebody had to take responsibility for this."

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, speaking to reporters on his way to London, said the security posts were for the Afghans to decide.

"I would just hope President Karzai will appoint in the place of those who have left people of equal caliber," Gates said.

U.S. officials had singled Saleh and Atmar by name as examples of competent leadership in a government riven by corruption and patronage. Both Saleh and Atmar accompanied Karzai on a trip to Washington last month to patch up strained ties with Obama's administration — a point that reinforced the surprise of Sunday's announcement. □

55 bodies recovered from old silver mine in Mexico

TAXCO, Mexico (AP) — At least 55 bodies have been recovered from an abandoned silver mine that became a dumping ground for apparent victims of Mexico's drug violence, authorities said Monday.

The search for more victims ended over the weekend at the mine on the outskirts of Taxco, a colonial-era tourist town famous for its silver jewelry, said Albertico Guinto, attorney general for the state of Guerrero.

Guinto said the overall toll could still rise, however, as forensic examiners try to determine whether other human remains, clothing and shoes found in the nearly 500-foot-deep () shaft correspond to victims already included in the tally.

Most of the bodies have not been identified, but prosecutors recently said one was a recently kidnapped prison director. At least 15 people have been detained in the case.

Police discovered the mass grave in late May based on a tip after the arrest of an organized crime suspect in the nearby city of Iguala.

Also Monday, authorities in the Caribbean

resort of Cancun were working to identify six bodies found in a cave over the weekend.

Quintana Roo state attorney general Francisco Alor initially said after the bodies were found Sunday that three had been cut open and their hearts removed.

He retracted that statement Monday, saying autopsies showed the organs were stabbed multiple times and essentially destroyed, but were never removed. Toxicology results found drugs in all six victims.

In the northern state of Durango, police reported the discovery of six decapitated men along with two heads.

Three more victims with severed heads were found by police in the central state of Morelos. A note left at the scene threatened people with ties to alleged drug trafficker Edgar Valdez Villareal, who authorities say is fighting Hector Beltran Leyva for control of the Beltran Leyva cartel.

Drug gang violence has claimed more than 22,700 lives since President Felipe Calderon launched a crackdown on cartels shortly after office in late 2006. □

Egypt: Gaza blockade a failure, border stays open

SARAH EL DEEB

Associated Press Writer

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — An Egyptian security official declared the blockade of Gaza a failure Monday and said his country will keep its border with the Palestinian territory open indefinitely. Keeping that crossing point open long term would ease the blockade imposed by Israel three years ago to isolate and punish Gaza's Hamas rulers. It also restores a link to the outside the world for some of Gaza's 1.5 million Palestinians.

Egypt opened its border with Gaza soon after Israel's deadly raid on an international flotilla of activists trying to break the blockade a week ago. Israel has not publicly protested the Egyptian move, but officials declined to comment Monday.

In another escalation of the tension off Gaza's shores, Israeli naval forces shot and killed four men wearing wet suits off the coast on Monday, and the militant group Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades said they were members of its marine unit training for a mission.

Vice President Joe Biden said Monday the U.S. is closely consulting with Egypt and other allies to find new ways to "address the humanitarian, economic, security, and political aspects of the situation in Gaza." He issued the statement after meeting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh.

Egypt's measures up to now constitute an incremental change rather than a radically different approach to the border closure. It appeared aimed, in part, at defusing some of the anger in the Arab and Muslim world over Egypt's role in maintaining the blockade.

For the time being, Egypt is only allowing a very restricted

group of Gazans to leave the territory, including medical patients, students attending foreign universities and those with residency abroad. In keeping the passenger terminal in the border town of Rafah open continually, rather than sporadically as before, Egypt is helping reduce the backlog of Gazans with the required permits waiting to get out.

Egypt and Israel have maintained the blockade since Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, with Israel describing it as an essential measure to stop weapons from reaching Hamas militants, who have hit southern Israel with rockets and in past years killed hundreds in suicide bombings.

The Egyptian security official said, however, that the closure has failed to achieve its goals, including the release of an Israeli soldier held by Hamas since 2006. Israeli airstrikes and Egyptian security efforts have also yet to choke off a bustling smuggling trade that uses hundreds of tunnels along the Gaza-Egypt border, though the official said Egypt is determined to shut them down.

Under the restrictions at the Rafah crossing point, Egypt is letting in some humanitarian aid but will not transfer large cargoshipmentsof construction material because the terminal is designed primarily as a crossing for travelers, said the Egyptian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Hamas welcomed the Egyptian move but said it hoped all Gazans would soon be able to travel freely without restrictions.

"We have said since the first day that the blockade on Gaza will end and we can see that on the ground right now, and we voice our hope that all other restrictions will be



A Palestinian family returns from Egypt to Gaza strip through Rafah crossing, southern Gaza Strip, Monday June 7, 2010. An Egyptian security official declared the blockade of Gaza a failure Monday and said his country will keep the Rafah crossing, on its border with the Palestinian territory, open indefinitely.

Associated Press

removed," Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said.

Hamas tightly controls access to Rafah, and only travelers with the proper permits can reach the terminal.

For its part, Israel allows through only basic humanitarian goods, blocking crucial items like cement needed to rebuild war damage because it argues the material could be used by Hamas. The closure has crushed Gaza's already fragile economy.

The Egyptian official said Israel must work out a new policy to end the suffering of the Palestinians while keeping pressure on Hamas.

Like Israel, Egypt also fears sharing a border with a slice of territory controlled by Islamic militants backed by regional rival Iran. Concerned about the flow of weapons, Egypt late last year began building an underground, metal barrier to seal the smuggling tunnels.

"We have a constant security concern, because Iran has its aims, Hezbollah has its aims,

Hamas has its aspirations and aims, and al-Qaida can very well be present in Sinai and Gaza," the official said.

Egypt has been harshly criticized in the Muslim world for having helped maintain the blockade.

The official called it a "continuously embarrassing situation" for Egypt and blamed Israel for thinking the closure could pressure Hamas to release the captured soldier, Gilad Schalit, or to abandon its extremist ideology.

In Monday's clash, the Israeli military said a naval force spotted the Palestinians in the waters off Gaza and opened fire. It claimed the forces had prevented an attack on Israeli targets.

Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades said the four killed were training in Gaza's waters. The violent offshoot of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah faction, made the claim in a text message sent to reporters in Gaza.

Four bodies were retrieved

and taken to a hospital in central Gaza, said Moawiya Hassanain, a Palestinian health official. The Palestinian naval police said two people were still missing.

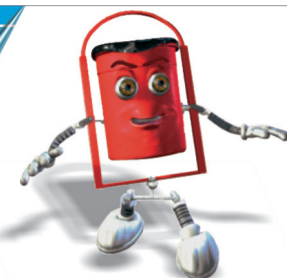
"The bloody escalation today is a desperate attempt by the occupation government to divert the world attention away from the massacre committed against the flotilla," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told reporters in Gaza.

The May 31 flotilla clash, in which eight Turkish men and one dual American-Turkish citizen were killed aboard one of the vessels seized by Israeli commandos, has put Israel under international pressure to lift or at least ease the blockade.

Israel has sought to portray the nine activists killed as militants, saying they prepared for the fight before boarding the flotilla. The military Monday released the names of five of the activists it said have long-standing ties to terror organizations. □

Aruba TODAY

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Indian court convicts 7 in Bhopal gas disaster

PRAKASH HATVALNE

Associated Press Writer

BHOPAL, India (AP) — A court Monday convicted seven former senior employees of Union Carbide's Indian subsidiary of "death by negligence" for their roles in the 1984 leak of toxic gas that killed an estimated 15,000 people in the world's worst industrial disaster.

Survivors of the Bhopal accident, some of whom gathered in this central Indian city chanting slogans, said the light sentences — two years in prison — are too little, too late given the scale of the damage. In India's notoriously slow justice system, the appeal process could drag on for years, even decades, while those convicted remain free on bail.

On the morning of Dec. 3, 1984, a pesticide plant run by Union Carbide leaked about 40 tons of deadly methyl isocyanate gas into the air of Bhopal, quickly killing about 4,000 people. Lingering effects of the poison raised the death toll to about 15,000 over the next few years, according

to government estimates.

In all, at least 500,000 people were affected, the Indian government says. More than 25 years later, activists say thousands of children are born with brain damage, missing palates and twisted limbs because of their parents' exposure to the gas or water contaminated by it.

The Union Carbide subsidiary's former employees, all Indian nationals and many in their 70s, were sentenced to two years in prison and ordered to pay fines of 100,000 rupees (\$2,175) apiece. All were released on bail shortly after the verdict.

The rulings appear set for appeals — the bail requests would be a first step in the appeal process — putting the case back into a notoriously slow and ineffective judicial system. India's court system is badly burdened by corruption, incompetence and a lack of resources, making it easy to stall a case for many years. On Monday, even top Indian judicial officials acknowledged the system was in trouble.

"It's most unfortunate that it

has taken that much of time to give the verdict," Law Minister Veerappa Moily told reporters after the ruling. "We need to address that."

Rachna Dhingra, a longtime activist with the Bhopal Group for Information and Action, a rights group that works with survivors, blasted Monday's ruling as "a travesty of justice."

"But this is not new or unexpected," Dhingra said. "Every one of these men is free on bail and will go home to their families tonight. For survivors and families of victims there is nothing to go home to. They lost their families."

The subsidiary, Union Carbide India Ltd., was convicted of the same charge as the individuals and ordered to pay a fine of rupees 500,000 (\$10,870). Union Carbide eventually sold its shares in the subsidiary company, which was renamed Eveready Industries India.

While the judge did not explain his negligence ruling against the seven, India's Central Bureau of Investigation, the country's top investigative



Partially blind gas victim waits for the verdict with other victims in the premises of Bhopal court in Bhopal, India, Monday, June 7, 2010. An Indian court on Monday convicted seven former senior employees of Union Carbide's Indian subsidiary of "death by negligence" for their roles in the Bhopal gas tragedy that left an estimated 15,000 people dead more than a quarter century ago in the world's worst industrial disaster.

agency, has said the plant was not following proper safety procedures before the disaster.

On Monday, Union Carbide in a statement on its website said the company and its officials were not subject to the jurisdiction of the Indian court since they did not have any involvement in the operation of the plant, which was owned and operated by UCIL. Union Carbide was bought by

Dow Chemical Co. in 2001. Dow says the legal case was resolved in 1989 when Union Carbide settled with the Indian government for \$470 million, and that all responsibility for the factory now rests with the government of the state of Madhya Pradesh, which now owns the site.

The Central Bureau of Investigation had originally accused 12 defendants: eight senior Indian company officials; Warren Anderson, the head of Union Carbide Corp. at the time of the gas leak; the company itself and two subsidiary companies.

The 12 had initially been charged with culpable homicide, but in 1996 India's Supreme Court reduced the charges to death by negligence, which carries a sentence of two years in prison.

Seven of the eight Indian company officials were convicted Monday. The other one has since died. Anderson and Union Carbide did not appear in the court proceedings.

Anderson was briefly detained immediately after the disaster, but he quickly left the country and now lives in New York.

Last July, the same court in Bhopal had issued a warrant for Anderson's arrest and also ordered the Indian government to press Washington for the American's extradition. It was not immediately clear if the Indian government had begun to process the Bhopal court's request. □

UN leader tasked with Guatemala crime woes resigns

JUAN CARLOS LLORCA

Associated Press Writer

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — The chief of a U.N. commission responsible for battling corruption and crime in Guatemala resigned Monday, accusing the country of failing to keep up its end of the deal and its new attorney general of corruption.

Spaniard Carlos Castresana, a judge by training, said Guatemala did not help the commission with its investigations.

"Nothing that was promised is being done," he told reporters, without offering any specifics. "On a personal level, I feel I cannot do anything more for Guatemala."

Castresana said one reason for the resignation was the appointment of Conrado Reyes as Guatemala's attorney general, accusing him of having a history of ties to organized crime.

Castresana called the nomination the result of a pact among lawyers for criminals who traffic in drugs and illegally adopted children, and he urged President Alvaro Colom to replace Reyes. "He is not the person that Guatemala deserves."

Reyes held a news conference later Monday to deny Castresana's allegations.

"I do not have, nor have I ever had, ties to the people and organizations he claims," Reyes said. "He had plenty of time (during the attorney general nominating process) to present evidence."

Castresana also cited what he called a smear campaign against him following the capture of ex-president Alfonso Portillo on U.S. money-laundering charges in January.

"Marketing professionals" have been spreading rumors about his private life and trying to discredit the commission's work, Castresana said.

Last week a local radio program alleged Castresana was



Carlos Castresana, commissioner of the UN-backed International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), speaks at a press conference where he announced his resignation in Guatemala City, Monday, June 7, 2010.

Associated Press

romantically involved with a staffer. Castresana did not directly address that Monday, but denied any "improper conduct."

Nearly 2,000 police have been fired and 130 top government officials and others sent to jail since the United Nations created the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala in 2007.

Castresana said last month that it would take about 10 years to dismantle illegal groups that arose after Guatemala's 1960-1996 civil war. The commission's mandate expires in September 2011, and Castresana had asked that it be broadened.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon accepted Castresana's resignation and a replacement will be chosen soon, spokesman Rene Mauricio Valdez said.



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U.S. says Yemeni authorities hold 12 Americans

ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Yemen authorities have 12 Americans in custody, and the arrests may be linked to a joint U.S.-Yemeni anti-terror campaign, a State Department spokesman said Monday.

The spokesman, P.J. Crowley, would provide no details about the case except to say the State Department is aware of the arrests and is seeking more information about the individuals being held.

The revelations come as the U.S. government continued to encourage Yemen to move against al-Qaida-linked militants in the country who officials fear may be involved in plots to attack the United States or other Western interests. U.S. officials worry that Yemen is becoming the next significant terror staging ground and say insurgents, including some individuals from the United States, are training in camps in Yemen's vast undergoverned spaces.

Last Wednesday, Yemeni security officials said authorities had detained several foreigners, including Americans, Britons and an Australian woman, in connection with an investigation into al-Qaida's increased activity in the country.

The arrests reported last week were made after foreign intelligence agencies provided lists of names of people they wanted to have detained or put under surveillance, according to two Yemeni security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not permitted to brief journalists.

It was not immediately clear whether the 12 Americans cited by Crowley were among those reported to have been rounded up last week, but Crowley suggested there may have been an anti-terror connection.

Asked whether he could confirm a report that

the Americans had been picked up in Yemen at the request of the U.S. government, Crowley replied, "We have great cooperation with the government of Yemen. Together, we are doing our best to help Yemen reduce the threat posed by al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. That's a threat to Yemen. It's a threat to the United States. But beyond that, I'm not going to talk about specifics."

Al-Qaida's offshoot in Yemen has steadily increased in strength since key leaders escaped from a Yemeni jail in 2006. In January 2009 it got another boost by merging with Saudi al-Qaida militants to form al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

The two Yemeni security officials who said last week that authorities had detained several foreigners on suspicion of connections to al-Qaida said some of them are believed to have been linked to the Nigerian man suspected of attempting to blow up a U.S.-bound airliner last December. U.S. investigators say the Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, has told them he was trained and instructed in the plot by al-Qaida in Yemen.

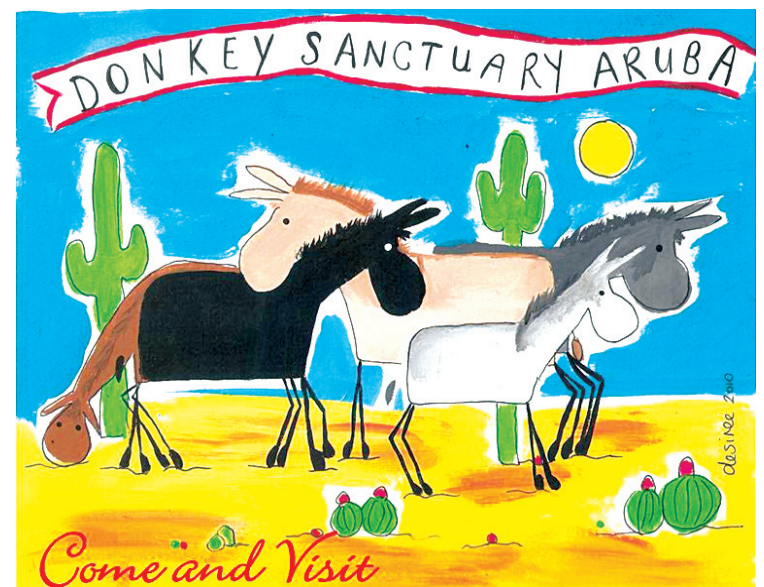
Some of the detainees also are thought to be connected to radical American-Yemeni cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, who is believed to have inspired attacks on the United States and is hiding in Yemen, the Yemeni security officials said.

The Defense Department in recent months approved spending \$155 million to help Yemen in its fight, including the purchase of four helicopters to support counterterror operations there. The money also includes \$34.5 million to train and equip the Yemeni special forces and another \$38 million for aircraft to allow those forces quicker access to hotspots in the country. □



This undated photo released by Amnesty International on Sunday, June 6, 2010, is claimed by them to show part of the bulkhead of a BGM-109D Tomahawk cruise missile, showing NATO-style electrical and data connectors, taken at a location in Yemen.

Associated Press



Aspire to host your own talk show? Oprah wants you



FILE - In this May 3, 2010 file photo, Oprah Winfrey arrives at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute gala in New York.

(AP Photo/Evan Agostini, file)

By **ALICIA RANCILIO**,
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Oprah Winfrey wants to give an undiscovered talent a chance to follow in her footsteps on her new cable

network.

The talk show host is teaming up with reality TV producer Mark Burnett on a show searching for the next big TV personality. “Your Own Show:

Oprah’s Search for the Next TV Star” will air on the Oprah Winfrey Network beginning in January, the same month of OWN’s launch.

Winfrey is ending “The Oprah Winfrey Show” in September 2011 after 25 seasons.

In a phone interview from Los Angeles, Burnett — the man behind such shows as “Survivor” and “The Apprentice” — said the premise fits perfectly into what people like to watch: Regular people achieving extraordinary things.

“The landscape and acceptance of ordinary people on television is widely accepted ... Much in the way ‘American Idol’ finds unknown people (to be recording stars) there’s no reason we can’t find someone who deserves their own show,” he said.

Aspiring hosts can upload videos to Oprah.com under categories like traditional talk show, cooking, health and wellness, and interior design. It’s possible to also watch and vote on submitted videos. In-person casting calls are happening this month in Atlanta, Dallas and Orange County, California.

Burnett said the most important advice he can give someone who wants to be considered is to be real.

“Try to be authentically yourself. Show energy,” he said.

Donald Trump gave me the greatest advice with ‘The

Apprentice’: Find people with the greatest energy source ... you’ll be hard-pressed to show me someone who has their own show on TV who is not energetic and who has charisma.”

The host of “Your Own Show” has yet to be announced. □

‘Shrek’ wins quiet weekend with \$25.5 million

LOS ANGELES — “Shrek Forever After” is lingering at the top of the box office, taking in \$25.5 million to hang on to the No. 1 spot for a third-straight weekend.

The animated hit easily fended off a rush of fresh films as audiences continued to show slim interest in new releases. The best of the newcomers, the rock ‘n’ roll comedy “Get Him to the Greek,” debuted at No. 2 with \$17.6 million.

The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Hollywood.com are:

1. “Shrek Forever After,” Paramount, \$25,486,465, 4,386 locations, \$5,811 average, \$183,229,453, three weeks.
2. “Get Him to the Greek,” Universal, \$17,570,955, 2,697 locations, \$6,515 average, \$17,570,955, one week.
3. “Killers,” Lionsgate, \$15,837,266, 2,859 locations, \$5,539 average, \$15,837,266, one week.
4. “Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time,” Disney, \$14,019,131, 3,646 locations, \$3,845 average, \$59,621,721, two weeks.
5. “Sex and the City 2,” Warner Bros., \$12,344,303, 3,445 locations, \$3,583 average, \$73,128,387, two weeks.
6. “Marmaduke,” Fox, \$11,599,661, 3,213 locations, \$3,610 average, \$11,599,661, one week.
7. “Iron Man 2,” Paramount, \$7,918,708, 3,007 locations, \$2,633 average, \$291,429,870, five weeks.
8. “Splice,” Warner Bros., \$7,385,277, 2,450 locations, \$3,014 average, \$7,385,277, one week.
9. “Robin Hood,” Universal, \$5,366,940, 2,599 locations, \$2,065 average, \$94,496,010, four weeks.
10. “Letters to Juliet,” Summit, \$3,036,367, 1,962 locations, \$1,548 average, \$43,337,836, four weeks.
11. “Raajneeti,” UTV Motion Pictures, \$850,244, 124 locations, \$6,857 average, \$850,244, one week.
12. “Date Night,” Fox, \$775,810, 658 locations, \$1,179 average, \$95,334,452, nine weeks.
13. “Just Wright,” Fox Searchlight, \$767,818, 518 locations, \$1,482 average, \$20,193,778, four weeks.
14. “How to Train Your Dragon,” Paramount, \$488,283, 343 locations, \$1,424 average, \$213,883,143, 11 weeks.
15. “The Secret in Their Eyes,” Sony Pictures Classics, \$397,705, 160 locations, \$2,486 average, \$3,992,319, eight weeks.
16. “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo,” Music Box Films, \$313,774, 152 locations, \$2,064 average, \$7,382,561, 12 weeks.
17. “City Island,” Anchor Bay, \$308,840, 177 locations, \$1,745 average, \$5,272,444, 12 weeks.
18. “Alice in Wonderland,” Disney, \$300,515, 277 locations, \$1,085 average, \$333,627,878, 14 weeks.
19. “Please Give,” Sony Pictures Classics, \$264,567, 87 locations, \$3,041 average, \$1,707,150, six weeks.
20. “Babies,” Focus, \$252,958, 181 locations, \$1,398 average, \$6,529,179, five weeks. □

Tucci signs on to superhero saga ‘Captain America’

LOS ANGELES — Stanley Tucci has signed on to help put Captain America in business. The Academy Award-nominated actor has joined the cast of the superhero saga “Captain America: The First Avenger.” Tucci will play Dr. Abraham Erskine, who in the Marvel Comics series was a scientist behind a supersoldier program that gave the title hero his powers. Due in theaters July 22, 2011, “Captain America” stars Chris

Evans in the title role and also features Hugo Weaving and Hayley Atwell.

Tucci, whose credits include “The Devil Wears Prada” and “Julie & Julia,” earned a supporting-actor nomination at the Oscars for last year’s “The Lovely Bones.”

FILE - In this March 7, 2010 file photo, actor Stanley Tucci arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar party in West Hollywood, Calif.

(AP Photo/Peter Kramer, file)



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Late slide: Stocks fall in last hour, Dow down 115

By TIM PARADIS,
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK – Traders gave in to another case of last-hour anxiety Monday and drove stocks to their lowest level in seven months.

The Dow Jones industrial average, down just 42 points at 3:15 p.m., closed down 115, or 1.2 percent. That extended the Dow's sharp drop from Friday, when it lost 323 in response to a disappointing May jobs report. Broader indexes had steeper percentage drops than the Dow on Monday. The technology-focused Nasdaq composite index fell 2 percent. Treasury prices rose as investors again went in search of safe investments.

There was no obvious catalyst for Monday's late slide, although traders were again preoccupied with Europe's economic problems. Traders know that Europe's business day begins before trading opens in the U.S., and they'd rather sell than wake up to an unpleasant surprise. The last-hour selling, which followed a similar move Friday, also recalled the 2008 financial crisis, when traders decided the best strategy was to dump stocks just before the close.

Monday's trading also showed how the market's own dynamics can trigger late selling. Shortly after 3 p.m., the Standard & Poor's 500 index fell below 1,056.74, what had been its low close for the year that it reached Feb. 8. That psychological blow encouraged many traders to sell, and as prices came down, computer "sell" programs kicked in, leading to more selling.

Tech stocks, seen as some of the most vulnerable when the economy and the market are troubled, suffered some of the biggest losses. That explains the drop in the Nasdaq index. But some stocks fell on their

own bad news.

Google Inc. was one of the big tech losers, falling 2.7 percent after Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal called on the company to "come clean" on its collection of personal and business data in the state for its mapping service.

Financial stocks fell after a commission examining the financial crisis issued a subpoena to Goldman Sachs Group Inc. Goldman fell 2.5 percent. And Bank of America Corp. lost 3.4 percent after news came out that the bank would pay \$108 million to settle federal charges that its Countrywide Financial Corp. division had collected onerous fees from homeowners nearing foreclosure.

Utility and gold stocks were among the few gainers, a sign that traders want investments considered safe in weak economies. Utility company FirstEnergy Corp. rose 2.7 percent, while Barrick Gold Corp. climbed 4.1 percent.

"The market is playing defense and waiting for some resolution," said Mike Shea, managing partner at Direct Access Partners LLC in New York, pointing to the rise in gold stocks.

Some traders say the market isn't likely to stabilize until there is a better sense about how European countries will hold up under heavy cost-cutting that could hamper their economic growth. Traders again looked to the euro for guidance. The 16-nation currency hit another four-year low. It fell as low as \$1.1878 before rising to \$1.1915. A drop in the currency is seen as a sign of flagging confidence in Europe's ability to contain its debt without falling back into recession.

The Dow fell 115.48, or 1.2 percent, to 9,816.49, while the S&P 500 index fell 14.41, or

1.4 percent, to 1,050.47.

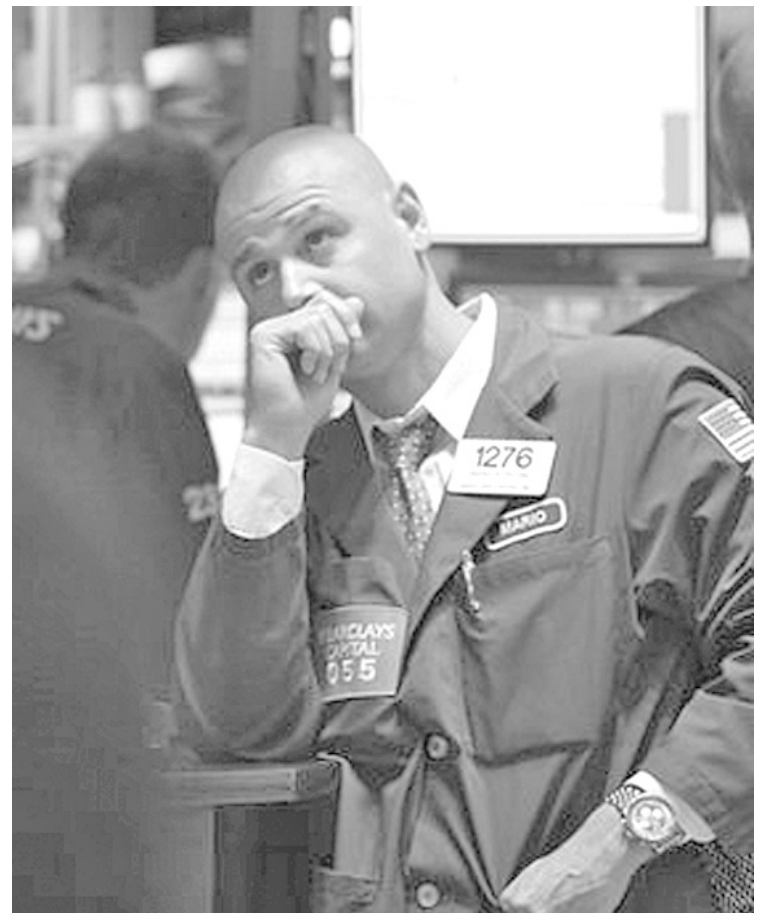
It was the lowest close for the Dow and the Standard & Poor's 500 index since Nov. 4.

The Nasdaq composite index fell 45.27, or 2 percent, to 2,173.90. The Nasdaq stands at its lowest level since Feb. 10.

Traders' worries, mostly about Europe, have pounded stocks since major indexes hit 2010 highs in late April. The Dow is down 12.4 percent since reaching 11,205 on April 26. The drop of more than 10 percent from the peak indicates a "correction." It's the first major drop since indexes bounced off 12-year lows in March last year.

Treasury prices extended their gains after surging Friday on concern about the employment numbers.

The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, which moves opposite its price, fell to 3.14 percent from 3.21 percent late Friday. □



Specialist Mario Picone works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Monday, June 7, 2010, in New York. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 115 points, or 1.2 percent, to its lowest close since November.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Consumer borrowing up slightly in April

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER,
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON – Consumer borrowing increased slightly in April, a sign that Americans may have more faith in the economic recovery.

Borrowing rose by \$954.8 million in April, the Federal Reserve said Monday. But the government revised away a gain it had originally reported for March. Instead, it reported that credit fell a sharp \$5.44 billion during that month.

The April increase, if it stands, would be only the second gain in the past 15 months. Economists are hoping that households will soon feel confident enough to borrow more and help sustain the recovery.

Consumer credit also rose in January. Beyond the January and April gains, consumer credit has posted a string of declines that started in February 2009. Households have cut back on their spending to repair their battered balance sheets.

The April gain represented a 0.5 percent

increase.

The strength in April reflected a 7.1 percent rise in nonrevolving credit, the category that includes auto loans. Auto spending has been boosted in recent months by incentives offered by automakers.

Revolving debt, which includes credit card borrowing, plunged 12 percent.

That was the 19th consecutive decline in this category.

Tighter credit conditions imposed by many banks could constrain the rebound.

For years, economists worried about the low personal savings rate among Americans. But now they fear less borrowing could hamper overall growth.

Consumer spending accounts for 70 percent of total economic activity.

The 0.5 percent rise in credit in April lifted total borrowing to \$2.44 trillion, still down 4.8 percent from a year ago.

The Fed's credit card report covers credit card debt, auto loans and other debt not secured by real estate. □

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY

NBA finals are Boston-bound tied at a game apiece

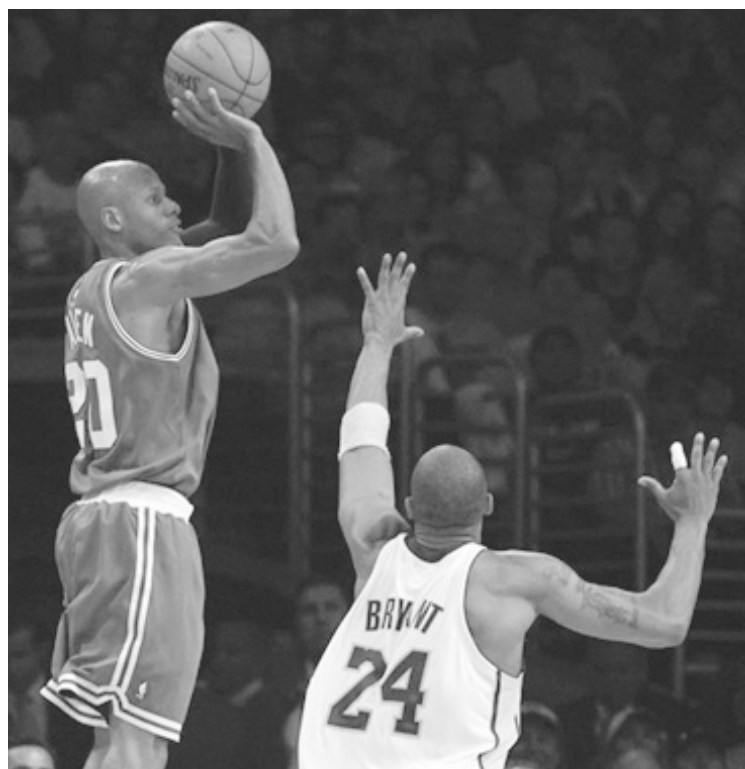
BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Kevin Garnett said he was looking forward to returning to Boston as his team bids to claim a trio of home wins over the Los Angeles Lakers to lock up an 18th NBA title.

The best-of-seven series is tied at 1-1 ahead of Game 3, which is played on Tuesday night. Two further games take place in Boston, on Thursday and Sunday, meaning the title could be wrapped up before the series goes back west.

Garnett said Sunday he was feeling good “going back to the jungle,” the site of perhaps the most miserable moment of Kobe Bryant’s career the last time he and the Lakers were here for the finals.

The finals are deadlocked after two games for the first



Boston Celtics guard Ray Allen shoots as Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant defends during the first half of Game 2 of the NBA basketball finals Sunday, June 6, 2010, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

time since 2004.

The Celtics evened the series with their 103-94 victory in Game 2, with guards Rajon Rondo and Ray Allen taking turns punishing the Lakers, and Bryant often powerless to stop them because of foul trouble.

A fuming Bryant had little to say afterward, offering terse responses as he looked back on that game and ahead to the next one.

“It’s the most important game. Game 1 was the most important, Game 2 was the most important, now it’s Game 3,” Bryant said. “It’s just the next game, simple as that.”

The Detroit Pistons split a pair of matches in Los Angeles in 2004 before coming home and winning three straight to take the series. That was Bryant’s first loss in the championship round. His other one came two years ago, on a night the Lakers will never forget.

The Celtics pummeled them 131-92 in a Game 6 rout that was decided after mere minutes. While Garnett, Allen and Pierce celebrated their long-awaited first NBA title, the humiliated Lakers sat trapped in their team bus as Boston fans taunted them from the street.

“Obviously there’s feelings involved and there’s memories that are in there, which should help us, should help us to push through and to battle even harder,” Lakers forward Pau Gasol said of that night.

Continued on Page 14

NL Roundup

Jimenez wins 11th, Rockies avoid sweep

PHOENIX (AP) — Ubaldo Jimenez became the first 11-game winner in the majors, though his scoreless innings streak ended after a franchise-record 33, and the Colorado Rockies held on to beat the Arizona Diamondbacks 3-2 on Sunday.

Jimenez (11-1) blanked the Diamondbacks through seven innings, then gave up just his second home run of the season, a two-run shot by Conor Jackson in the eighth. It was Arizona’s first score against the hard-throwing right-hander in 27 innings dating to last August.

Jimenez allowed six hits, struck out eight and walked three as his ERA rose to 0.93. His 11 wins are three more than any other pitcher has.

Arizona set a franchise record with its seventh consecutive one-run game. Colorado had lost three in a row, matching its longest skid this season.

Carlos Gonzalez hit a two-run single off Rodrigo Lopez (2-4), and Troy Tulowitzki homered for the Rockies. Manny Corpas pitched a perfect ninth for his sixth save.

Dodgers 5, Braves 4, 11 innings

At Los Angeles, A.J. Ellis hit an RBI single in the 11th inning to give Los Angeles a victory over Atlanta and a split of their four-game series.

Pinch-hitter Russell Martin drew a leadoff walk from Jesse Chavez (0-0), advanced on Blake DeWitt’s bunt and came home when Ellis stroked a 1-2 pitch to left for his seventh

RBI of the season.

Ronald Belisario (1-0) pitched two innings of two-hit ball for the win. Rafael Furcal hit his first home run of the season and James Loney had a two-run single for the Dodgers.

Mets 7, Marlins 6

At New York, Jeff Francoeur hit a tying, three-run homer in the seventh inning as New York rallied to beat Florida, running its home winning streak to eight games.

Angel Pagan had a two-run single in a three-run sixth and scored the go-ahead run when Ike Davis grounded sharply into a double play in the eighth.

Pedro Feliciano (2-2) struck out Chris Coghlan with runners on first and second to end the eighth, and Francisco



Colorado Rockies’ Ubaldo Jimenez (38) wipes his face after giving up a two-run home run to Arizona Diamondbacks’ Conor Jackson, right, to end Jimenez’s scoreless pitching streak at 33 innings, as Rockies’ Troy Tulowitzki looks on during the eighth inning of a baseball game Sunday, June 6, 2010, in Phoenix. The Rockies defeated the Diamondbacks 3-2.

Associated Press

Rodriguez finished for his 12th save. Cody Ross struck out with a runner on second to end it.

In other NL games it was, N.Y. Mets 7, Florida 6; Cincinnati 5, Washington 4, 10 innings; San Diego 6, Philadelphia 5,

10 innings; San Francisco 6, Pittsburgh 5, 10 innings; Houston 6, Chicago Cubs 3; L.A. Dodgers 5, Atlanta 4, 11 innings; Colorado 3, Arizona 2; and Milwaukee 4, St. Louis 3, 10 innings. □

Blackhawks are one win from Stanley Cup

RICK GANO

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP)—Coach Joel Quenneville's adjustments and line shuffling have helped the Chicago Blackhawks' high-energy offense find another gear and move closer to the team's first championship in 49 years.

Now with a day off to rest after a 7-4 win put his team up 3-2 in the Stanley Cup finals, Quenneville is expecting Chicago to come out Wednesday in Philadelphia with the same aggressive approach.

He called Game 6 the biggest game ever for him and most of his players and said the Blackhawks would have to channel their emotions and withstand what will certainly be a hard charge early from

the Flyers.

Chicago is 7-3 on the road in these playoffs but lost its first two tries in Philly.

In Game 5, Chicago stormed out with three first-period goals, prompted a goaltender switch by the Flyers from Michael Leighton to Brian Boucher, and ended up with goals from six different players. Quenneville broke up his first three lines, separating his former first line of Jonathan Toews, Patrick Kane and Dustin Byfuglien. Is more shifting a possibility?

"Status quo would probably be the best way to go, (heading) into the next game," Quenneville said Monday.

Byfuglien had two goals and two assists and Kane a goal and assist as the Blackhawks were able to split their talent

and force Philly defensive star Chris Pronger into a minus-5 night. Pronger was also in the penalty box when Byfuglien scored his first goal of the series.

And after going 1-for-9 in the first four games of the series, the Blackhawks converted twice on four chances with a man advantage.

"We just settled down and played our game and that's a big factor, just even with the even strength, we came out ready to go, controlling the puck a little better," Byfuglien said. "That led into the power play with guys just settling down, confidence and just playing. That's something we needed to do."

But now can they carry it over in their return to Philly?

"Nothing's won yet," Chicago



Chicago Blackhawks players celebrate after beating the Philadelphia Flyers 7-4 in Game 5 of the NHL Stanley Cup hockey finals on Sunday, June 6, 2010, in Chicago. From left are Marian Hossa, of Slovakia, Patrick Kane (88), Dustin Byfuglien, and Jonathan Toews (19). The Blackhawks lead the series 3-2.

Associated Press

defenseman Duncan Keith said. "We know going forward we're going to need the same effort, even better."

The Blackhawks PR machine

has been pushing the "One Goal" theme for two years — that of course being the Stanley Cup, something the franchise hasn't hoisted since the days of Bobby Hull and Stan Mikita in 1961.

A day off the ice Monday gave the Blackhawks time to rest and reflect on how far they have come since training camp started way back in September.

Quenneville was ready to embark on a year of scouting when Chicago fired Denis Savard four games into last season. Now in his first trip to the finals as a head coach, he's appreciative of how his life has changed.

"It's been a lot of fun. I've been very fortunate to come here at the time, receiving a tremendous hockey team with great kids that like being around each other. Have a lot of skill and talent," Quenneville said.

"Things change rapidly. I was the beneficiary of coming in with a great opportunity at the right time. I feel lucky."

Quenneville knows his team will face an early hard charge from the Flyers and says controlling emotions will be play a big role.

"It's a huge game, biggest game of our lives," Quenneville said. "Channel it properly, and control — we control what we can control and that's your next shift." □

AL Roundup

Orioles beat Red Sox 4-3

BALTIMORE (AP) — The Baltimore Orioles ended their 10-game losing streak in dramatic fashion, getting an RBI single from slumping Nick Markakis in the 11th inning to defeat the Boston Red Sox 4-3 Sunday.

The victory was the first for interim manager Juan Samuel, who was promoted when Dave Trembley was fired Friday. The Orioles lost Samuel's first two games by a combined 19-2 score.

Cesar Izturis led off the 11th with a walk against Hideki Okajima (2-2) and went to second on a sacrifice. After Miguel Tejada was walked intentionally, Markakis — mired in an 0-for-14 skid — blooped a single to center that easily scored the winning run.

Yankees 4, Blue Jays 3

At Toronto, Robinson Cano hit a tiebreaking, two-run single in the eighth inning as New York rallied past Toronto to avoid a three-game sweep.

Vernon Wells' two-run homer in the sixth was the only hit allowed by Yankees starter Javier Vazquez (5-5) in seven innings, and New York's power-packed lineup — which managed just three runs in the first 30 innings of the series — scored four times in the eighth.

The comeback spoiled a fine outing by Blue Jays right-hander Brandon Morrow, who didn't allow a run through the first seven innings. Scott Downs (1-5) took the loss.

Rays 9, Rangers 5

At Arlington, Texas, John Jaso drove in five runs and Matt Garza won for the first time in a month as Tampa Bay avoided a weekend sweep to Texas.

Jaso had a two-run homer, a two-run single and an RBI double as the designated hitter from the leadoff spot, a day after the rookie became the first Rays catcher ever to bat first.

Carlos Pena also homered for Tampa Bay (37-20), which still has the best record in the majors and a two-game lead over the New York Yankees in the AL East.

Athletics 5, Twins 4



Baltimore Orioles' Nick Markakis follows his game winning RBI single against the Boston Red Sox during the 11th inning of a baseball game, Sunday, June 6, 2010, in Baltimore. The Orioles won 4-3.

Associated Press

At Oakland, California, Gio Gonzalez struck out four batters in seven innings to win his third straight decision as Oakland scored all of its runs with two outs against Minnesota.

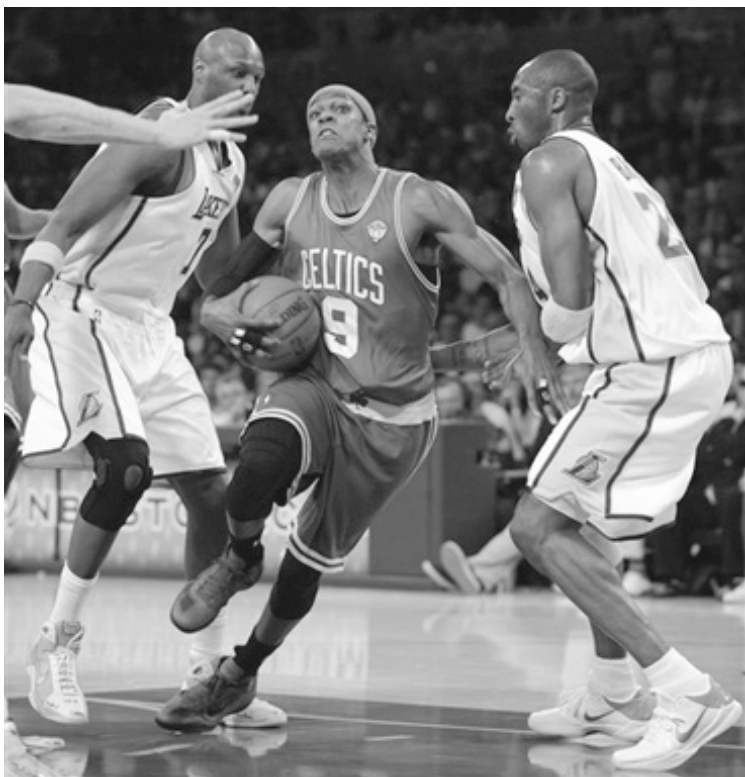
Jack Cust and Kevin Kouzmanoff hit back-to-back RBI singles in the first to stake Gonzalez (6-3) to an early 2-0 lead. Ryan Sweeney hit an RBI double in the second and Mark Ellis and Cliff Pennington added RBI singles in the third to chase the Twins' Nick Blackburn (6-3).

Delmon Young hit a two-run homer off Tyson Ross in the eighth for the Twins, who were tying for their first sweep in Oakland since July 18-20, 1997.

Royals 7, Tigers 2

At Kansas City, Missouri, Brian Bannister won his career-high fifth straight start and Jose Guillen hit a three-run homer as Kansas City roughed up Jeremy Bonderman.

In other AL games it was, N.Y. Yankees 4, Toronto 3; Baltimore 4, Boston 3, 11 innings; Chicago White Sox 8, Cleveland 7; Kansas City 7, Detroit 2; Tampa Bay 9, Texas 5; Oakland 5, Minnesota 4; and L.A. Angels 9, Seattle 4. □



Boston Celtics guard Rajon Rondo drives against Los Angeles Lakers forward Lamar Odom, left, and Lakers' Kobe Bryant during the first half of Game 2 of the NBA basketball finals Sunday, June 6, 2010, in Los Angeles.

NBA FINALS

Continued from Page 12

Both teams were off Monday following the cross-country flight from Los Angeles. The 2-3-2 format in the NBA finals was instituted in the mid-1980s, when Lakers-Celtics matchups were as common in June as graduation parties, to limit the amount of coast-to-coast trips. But

a return to California won't be needed if either team can win three straight. "We took home court, so we've got a chance to play three games (at home)," Celtics forward Paul Pierce said Sunday. "But I told you all ... doesn't guarantee we're going to win the games because we're at home. We've got to go out there and play the game. They're going to

be coming into our house and we can't assume anything. We can't take it for granted." The Celtics turned things around following their 102-89 loss in their opener by toughening up their defense, limiting the Lakers to 41 percent shooting. Rondo tracked down the long rebounds of many missed shots to ignite Boston's fast break, and Allen capitalized on the open looks that created by making an NBA finals-record eight 3-pointers while scoring 32 points. The Lakers were frustrated by the foul trouble for Bryant and top reserve Lamar Odom, who has been ineffective in both games. Bryant was more annoyed with his team's defense against Boston's guards, wasting strong efforts from Gasol and center Andrew Bynum. "It has nothing to do with scoring. Nothing. It's all defensively," Bryant said. "We gave them too many easy baskets and blew too many defensive assignments. That's it." Now they'll have to play better on the road than they have in some previous series, having lost twice at both Oklahoma City and Phoenix earlier in the postseason. □

WNBA Roundup

Sun beat Silver Stars to improve to 5-0 at home

UNCASVILLE, Connecticut (AP) — Tina Charles had 19 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Connecticut Sun to an 81-68 victory over the San Antonio Silver Stars in the WNBA on Sunday.

Renee Montgomery had 16 points while shooting 4 for 8 on 3-pointers and DeMya Walker added a season-high 12 points for the Sun (5-2), who improved to 5-0 at home. Sophia Young scored 21 points to lead San Antonio (2-6). Chamique Holdsclaw had 14 points and Roneeka Hodges added 10.

Fever 89, Lynx 51

At Minneapolis, Tamika Catchings scored 27 points to lead Indiana past Minnesota for its third straight win.

Katie Douglas added 12 and Tammy Sutton-Brown and Shavonte Zellous each finished with 10 to lead the Fever (5-3) to their fifth win in six games.

Rebekkah Brunson led the Lynx (2-7) with 10 points and 12 rebounds, her third straight double-double. Candice Wiggins added 11, but shot just 1 for 8.

Storm 97, Mercury 74

At Seattle, Lauren Jackson, Camille Little and Swin Cash scored 16 points each to lead Seattle past Phoenix for its fourth straight win.

Tanisha Wright added 13 points and Sue Bird had 12 points and 11 assists for Seattle (8-1), which boosted its Western Conference lead to four games over second-place Phoenix (3-4) and Tulsa.

DeWanna Bonner and Taylor Lilley scored 12 points and Diana Taurasi 11 to lead the Mercury. □



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Nadal replaces Federer at No. 1 in ATP rankings

HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

PARIS (AP) — French Open champion Rafael Nadal returned to No. 1 in the ATP rankings Monday, reclaiming the top spot from Roger Federer 11 months after relinquishing it.

Nadal's fifth title at Roland Garros — a year after he was upset in the fourth round — gave him enough rankings points to move up from No. 2. He was ranked No. 1 for 46 weeks previously, but was overtaken by Federer in July 2009.

"Believe me, I am very happy"

about getting back to the top, Nadal said after beating Robin Soderling 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 in Sunday's French Open final. But the 24-year-old Spaniard also made perfectly clear that he was more excited about winning his seventh Grand Slam title than his new ranking.

"When I was crying after the match," he said, "the last thing I was thinking (about was) No. 1."

Toni Nadal, Rafael's uncle and coach, agreed.

"Being No. 1 is nice after the tournament," Toni Nadal said Sunday, "but the most

important thing is the trophy." By getting bumped down to No. 2, Federer was left one week short of tying Pete Sampras' career record of 286 total weeks at No. 1.

Federer won last year's French Open, but he lost to Soderling in the quarterfinals last week. Soderling's second consecutive runner-up finish at Roland Garros — he also was the player who stunned Nadal in 2009 — allowed him to rise one place to a career-high No. 6.

"This was very, very important for the rest of the season, to build a little bit of confidence



Spain's Rafael Nadal jubilates after defeating Sweden's Robin Soderling during a men's finals match for the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, Sunday, June 6, 2010.

Associated Press

Armstrong third; Carrara wins Tour of Luxembourg

LUXEMBOURG (AP) — Italian Matteo Carrara won the Tour of Luxembourg with Lance Armstrong ending third in the overall standings on Sunday.

The fourth and last stage, which was shortened because of torrential rain, was won by Spaniard Gorka Izaguirre in a sprint.

Carrara claimed his first major win ahead of 2009 winner Frank Schleck of Luxembourg.

"I'm so happy, it's a beautiful victory, my best victory," the 31-year-old Carrara said.

Armstrong, who had a verbal altercation with a spectator after the race, was competing as part of his preparations for the Tour de France.

The race was neutralized in the last of the local loops in Luxembourg, about 10 kilometers from the finish, allowing riders who were not aiming for the stage victory to join the back of the peloton. Seven-time Tour de France champion Armstrong didn't take any risk.

"I just wanted to avoid issues, or problems, or crashes, or accident," Armstrong said. "I think we have to make a good progression from here, to Switzerland and the Tour."

Armstrong was loudly cheered by local fans after the race but he got involved in an exchange with one man who called him



Italy's Matteo Carrara, center, of the Vancasoleil team, Luxembourg's Frank Schleck, left, of the Saxo Bank team and U.S. Lance Armstrong of the RadioShack team smile as they stand on the podium of the Tour de Luxembourg in Luxembourg, Sunday June 6, 2010. Carrara won the Tour de Luxembourg, Schleck placed second and Armstrong third.

Associated Press

a "liar" and a "cheat".

The American, who has had to put up with doping allegations for much of his career despite never having failed a test and always denied taking banned substances, jumped on the barrier separating his bus from the fans.

"Why don't you come and tell this to my face," said Armstrong. The man did not respond, and moved away shortly afterwards.

Armstrong, who won the race in 1998 when he came back from cancer, had started the Luxembourg event with a solid performance in Wednesday's prologue before losing ground in the second stage when Carrara

and defending champion Frank Schleck attacked in the last climb. Schleck finished second overall, one second behind Carrara.

"Any time you can win a race, or be on the podium during your preparations, it's important," Armstrong said. "I wouldn't have thought I would ride so strong this week. It's been a good four days. I felt strong."

His manager at team RadioShack Johan Bruyneel said competing in Luxembourg will have been very helpful.

"I think it was a very good choice to race here because the average level was very good," Bruyneel said. □

and to be able to play better and better for every match. Because he was tense going in. The last couple of weeks before the French, he was talking a lot about how many (rankings) points he has to defend," said Soderling's coach, Magnus Norman.

No. 3 Novak Djokovic, No. 4 Andy Murray and No. 5 Nikolay Davydenko stayed put from the previous rankings, while Andy Roddick went up one spot to No. 7, and reigning U.S. Open champion Juan Martin del Potro slid two notches to No. 8. He missed the French Open, sidelined by right wrist surgery.

Surprise semifinalist Jurgen Melzer jumped 11 spots to a career-high 16th, while the biggest move by anyone in the top 100 was made by Robby Ginepri, who climbed from 98th to 70th by reaching the fourth round in Paris.

In the WTA rankings, sisters

Serena and Venus Williams remain at Nos. 1 and 2 in singles — part of a top five that is unchanged — and they now are tied for No. 1 in doubles after pairing to win the French Open for their fourth consecutive Grand Slam doubles title.

French Open champion Francesca Schiavone went up 11 spots to a career-high No. 6 in singles. She turns 30 on June 23, and is the oldest woman to make her debut in the top 10 since 30-year-old Nathalie Tauziat did it in 1998.

Schiavone became Italy's first female Grand Slam champion by beating Australia's Samantha Stosur 6-4, 7-6 (2) Saturday. It was the first major final for both, and Stosur kept her No. 7 ranking.

Asked about reaching the top 10, Schiavone said: "It's something I've always wanted, something I always sought." □

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slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but **Texas de Brazil's** version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, home-made soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, **Texas de Brazil** will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

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U.S. agents seize cocaine cache on fishing boat

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — U.S. authorities have seized 3,269 pounds of cocaine from a rusty Panama-flagged fishing boat and arrested five Honduran crew members, officials announced Monday. The Drug Enforcement Administration said a Coast Guard unit seized the fishing boat, the "Two Brothers," some 34 miles northwest of the capital of the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba. They towed the boat to Puerto Rico's capital, San Juan.

In the U.S. territory, agents wearing DEA jackets unloaded 66 bales of cocaine from the 87-foot fishing boat and guarded it on the pier. Authorities said the cocaine has an estimated value of \$46 million.

The drugs were concealed inside a ballast water tank, Coast Guard spokesman Ricardo Castrodad said.

The five crew members will face a raft of drug smuggling charges. The suspects were delivered to Puerto Rico by agents from the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force, which investigates the trafficking of South American drugs.

While most of the drugs reaching the United States cross the southwest border with Mexico, an estimated 30 percent come through the Caribbean. The drugs are often spirited ashore along Puerto Rico's 300-mile coastline in boats from neighboring islands. □

At the Westin Aruba Resort

Excellent Concert Concludes the Sixth Annual Art, Wine & Food Festival

PALM BEACH -- The Sleepwalker Concert, in the grand ballroom of the Westin Aruba Resort was a fantastic success. It featured famed local guitarist Ernesto Ferro with legendary American composer, steel guitarist Johnny Farina, with Durban Laverde former Led Zeppelin guitar player on bass and Aruba's very own Hildward Croes on keyboard, with Jeremy Bonarriba on percussion. Vocalist Angela Croes gave a stellar performance with Freddie Mercury's Somebody to Love and young star Sergio Jansen, electrified the room with his music.

Continued on Next Page



Izaline Callister mesmerizes and captivates her friends



ORANJESTAD - Edison winner 2010 Izaline Callister had a blast this past weekend in a decidedly chilly Cas di Cultura: without any effort at all she mesmerized her captive audience with her great smile, her supple voice and her stories and interaction. Barefoot, as is her trademark, Izaline sang her repertoire of songs in Papiamentu, some with a jazzy Brazilian touch, others in true Caribbean style. The subjects of the songs were quite simple: soup, water and a man named Juni, among others. This might sound derogative, but no: the singer makes every word uttered into a festive happening and so even the song about soup was lively and a lot of fun. Her band and back-up singer were outstanding and the cheers and standing ovation afterward her concert were definitely also for them.

On both evenings Izaline's performance had a special, small-packaged highlight: the singer introduced Victoria, her cute, wide-eyed little baby girl.

Continued on Page B4



Excellent Concert Concludes the Sixth Annual Art, Wine & Food Festival



Continued from Page B1

The songs, from the 50s to the 80s, included many great classics, from Somewhere over the Rainbow to Summertime, and Beatles hits with Johnny Farina on his talking steel guitar giving a dynamic, lively and fresh interpretation to the much-loved music.

Local musicians and fans joined guests of the Champagne Sparkle gala dinner, to form an enthusiastic audience. □



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In Parke Nacional Arikok

Bat population recovers, but caves will remain closed to promote regeneration

O R A N J E S T A D — Management of the Aruba national park, Parke Nacional Arikok will continue monitoring the bat population in the park, after investigation indicate the population is slowing coming back. The park closed down two caves in an effort to save the endangered bats some time ago. According to a spokesperson for the park, the number of bats in the various colonies had diminished drastically, particularly during the installation of the wind turbines in Vader Piet. In fact, there was a time in that period that some colonies disappeared completely.

The caves are the Huliba Cave, its neighboring Tunnel of Love and the second chamber of the Quadirikiri Cave.

These caves were always very popular among locals and visitors, who would visit these large crevices in the limestone plateau located in the north eastern part of the island. The caves are being considered to be placed in the list of UNESCO's protected natural wonders, and always attracted visitors for their natural beauty, historical contexts and also as the homes of Aruba's bats.

However, park rangers who have been observing the colonies for some time already, noticed a dramatic

drop in number of bats in the different groups, and more seriously, some colonies completely vanished once the work to install wind turbines located right outside the park premises at the eastern part were taking place. The decline in population started a few years ago, and experts were brought to Aruba to study whether the turbine project could be detrimental for the bats. The initial study showed a flight pattern of the animals that could conflict with the turbines. But the study was not conclusive. Scientists however suggested the shutdown of some key caves to promote the regeneration of the bat colonies, as these are crucial for the eco system in the park. Bats are co-responsible to pollinate the cacti, which in turn are necessary to support the animal population in the park, in particular.

Park rangers noticed the drilling process that preceded the set up of the turbines also affected the mammals. The hard lime stone had to

be crushed and had a ripple effect on to the entire corridor. Yet, once the prep work was concluded the animals returned and even showed signs of regeneration. The investigation on the stability of some of the colonies is still ongoing and therefore it was decided to keep the caves closed for human access. Quadirikiri, one of the most visited caves, consists of three chambers and the intention now is to open the second chamber for human access, leaving the last one in accessible so that the bats can be undisturbed. Huliba Cave has been closed for some time; also because it can be dangerous for visitors who are not familiar with it tunnels, while the Tunnel of Love is home to a species of endangered bats and therefore will remain closed for an indefinite period.

Park management is still considering whether this cave should be opened in the future or not, and this will depend on whether it is possible to instate guides to



ensure safety of visitors.

The Fontein Cave was never closed to the public and will remain open. Like

Quadirikiri, the Fontein Cave is of special historic value, due to the prehistoric drawings. □

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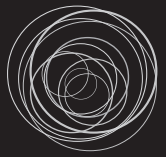


Continued from Page B1
Showing her off was one of the reasons that the singer had flown to her native island Curaçao, with Aruba put in as an extra bonus.

Eric Eman, organizer of the concerts, presented Izaline with a dress in Aruban colors: it looked a bit too large for Victoria, but she will grow into it for sure.

With Prime Minister Eman and his wife Doine as guests of honor, and the audience bewitched and charmed, it felt like Izaline was on stage amidst a large group of beaming friends. In short: Izaline was fantastic! □





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At Renaissance Aruba Resort

Alwin, Nector & Raquel form the Hotel Team of the First Quarter 2010



ORANESTAD – Renaissance Aruba Resort hosted a well-attended lunch party at the Renaissance Convention Center recently, in which the nominees and the winners for the Hotel Team of the First Quarter 2010, were announced, and recognized by General Manager Paul Gielen and his team.

Alwin Golding, a Receiving Clerk, nominated by Angela Hagedoorn was the winner for the Heart of the House. Other

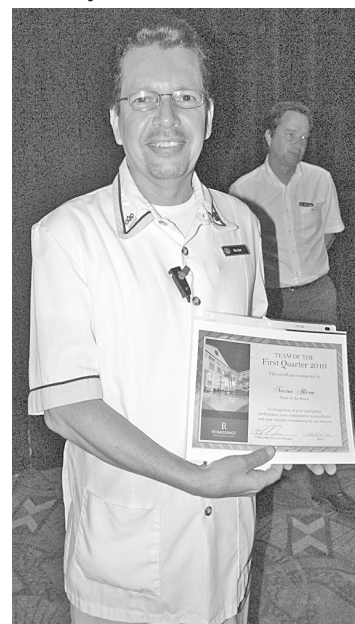
nominees included Javier Mendoza, Steward; Sandra van Wijk, Cafeteria; Pauline Ashley, Room Attendant Ocean Suites; Guerline Suprey, Steward; Adrian Martilia, General Engineer and Wesley Bonsink, Kitchen Technician. Nector Alicea, from the Belldesk, nominated by Selmar de Roo was the winner for the Front of the House. Other nominees included Ursula Philipps, Spa Attendant and Rudmar Paesch,

Sole Poolbar.

Raquel Muyale, Accounting, nominated by Aura Kock, was the winner among dedicated Supervisors. Her fellow nominees were Carmen Carrillo, Steward Supervisor; Zulaika Dijkhoff-Boekhoudt, Vacation Planner; Ida Ildge, Housekeeping Supervisor Ocean Suites; Mathilda, Ina, Croes, Housekeeping Supervisor Marina Hotel, and Javier Croes, Food & Beverage Supervisor.



The winners and nominees posed for a picture opportunity receiving a round of applause during the first three months of the year. □



HUMAN HINTS

It Is What It Is

I have a confession for you, Dear Readers. I enjoy NFL Football. My justifications are both numerous and complex. Although the salaries are beyond obscene, the money generated by the National Football League and their associates help communities and kids tremendously, in ways no one else can. The kid's passion provides a hook to pull them away from the negative forces that dominate their lives.

Last season, I noticed the post-game interview of an NFL star whose efforts had just won the game. He gasped for breath as he wiped rivers of glistening sweat from his face. Beaming with Life Force, he strained to gain his composure against the chaotic celebration surrounding him. I don't remember his name, and I don't remember the question he was asked, but

his seemingly simplistic answer could not mask the profound potential held within his words.

"It is what it is. And sometimes it is what it isn't. But we are who we are right now and that's what matters."

"It is what it is." We cannot argue with the existing three dimensional facts. This has become a common saying in the US. As goofy as it sounds at face value, the power of this simple phrase over the mind is tremendous. When we approach bad news and setbacks from the mindset of, "It is what it is," we immediately separate our emotions from the situation. The only thing we can do is accept the three dimensional facts and go from there. "It is what it is, now what do we do."

"Sometimes it is what it isn't." The reality that we make up in our mind is often vastly different than the three dimensional facts. Our emotions and hormones are constantly manipulating our thoughts, forcing them into places that hold no similarity whatsoever to three dimensional facts.

We must remain vigilant in our own minds, constantly stopping our thoughts from wandering too far from three dimensional facts. Some of us are better than others at this. Many of us make things up in our minds just for the excitement, because the three dimensional facts are too monotonous to face without a little distraction, even if it's 'only' in our mind.

"We are who we are right now..." Again we find that stating the obvious can illuminate profound insight. We are NOT who we were years ago, last month, or even yesterday. We are who we are right now. Given the exact same situation, the way we act, think and feel in this moment is different than a few hours ago. Whether the change is slight or dramatic, we become a different person in every moment.

"...and that's what matters." All that matters is who we are right now. The past helped us become who we are, and we hold power in this now moment. Our actions, thoughts and feelings right now define


who we are in this moment. What happened to us in the past is meaningless. What will happen in our future is way beyond our capacity to see or understand. Only who we are right Now matters.

Until Tomorrow...


~**Quentin Danziger**

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought. HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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PG	SHREK FOREVER AFTER 3D	daily: 4:00	6:15	8:30
	matinee: 1:30		late show: 11:15	
PG-13	DEATH AT A FUNERAL	daily: 4:45	7:00	9:15
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R	SEX AND THE CITY	daily: 5:45	8:30	
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AT PASEO HERENCIA

PG-13	IRON MAN 2	daily: 9:00	
	matinee:	late show: 23:45	
PG	JUST WRIGHT	daily: 9:15	
	matinee:	late show: 11:30	
PG	LETTERS TO JULIET	daily:	
	matinee:	late show: 12:00	
PG-13	ROBIN HOOD	daily:	
	matinee:	late show: 11:00	
PG	SHREK FOREVER AFTER	daily:	
	matinee:	late show: 11:15	
R	SEX AND THE CITY	daily: 6:00	
	matinee:	late show: 11:30	

Due to the Aruba International Film Festival, from June 4 till June 11, there is limited showing at Paseo Herencia. For more information regarding the Aruba International Film Festival, visit their web site: www.arubafilmmfest.com

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La Cabana Lends a Helping Hand to its Haitian Associates



EAGLE BEACH – A special committee was set up at La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club designed to organize fund raising activities benefiting Haitian associates with family members in need on that quake-stricken neighboring island.

Miriam Courtar, Housekeeping Manager, felt the initiative would support associates struggling to help their family members living in Haiti, post-disaster.

The cash raised were deposited in a Community Fund, and was distributed this week to each of the 14 Haitian associates, so they could see how best help their kin.

Two activities were held: the Carnival Jump-In featuring a raffle for a week-end stay and soup & sandwich sales. Additionally, on Aruba Flag & Anthem Day during the resort celebration, the dessert sale helped generated some income, which was also divided.

The donations were received with a sense of gratitude, as La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club really cares for its extended family members, beyond expectations, and in a very special way.

Pictured here associates and members of management, distributing funds raised for a good cause. □

Spectacular seafood special at Driftwood

From the pier to your plate at authentic Aruban seafood restaurant

ORANJESTAD - It's happening downtown. Established Driftwood Restaurant launches a serie of spectacular and delicious seafood specials, available now.

Driftwood is specialized in fresh seafood from the Caribbean Sea and has become the favorite spot for Aruban-style seafood dishes. Fresh fish is caught daily by the owner himself and



perfectly and authentically prepared by their talented local Chef.

Located in the heart of characteristic downtown, Driftwood offers you a unique dining experience. Enjoy the freshest fish, biggest shrimp, or the most succulent Caribbean lobster amid the rustic ambience of the natural driftwood dining room.

The authentic local seafood restaurant.

The menu includes a large variety of typically Aruban delicacies including a three star fish soup and a mouth-watering filet of fish served with a mild Aruban Creole sauce... a seafood lover's dream come true.

Opening hours: every day, but Tuesdays from 5pm till 10:30pm.



Special of the month

Every month the Chef treats his customers with a delicious dinner special. In June one may choose from different soups, fish cakes or salads to start with. The main

course is a choice of catch of the day (prepared your way), Jumbo Shrimp or for the meatlovers Filet Mignon or Chicken Breast. The evening is topped with a grand dessert and coffee or tea.

Driftwood Restaurant

Klipstraat 12, Oranjestad

Reservations: **583 2515**

Email: info@driftwoodaruba.com

Website: www.driftwoodaruba.com



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\$24
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At the Westin Resort Aruba

Tremendous Wine and Food Tasting and Art Exhibition



PALM BEACH – During the sixth annual Art, Wine & Food Festival, on the second evening, a tremendous Wine and Food Tasting and Art Exhibition, attracted a great crowd to the Westin Resort, Aruba, grand ballroom.

The all-you-care-to-drink-and-eat event was hosted by Executive Chef Matt Boland and EPI culinary school students which competed for the best dish, judged by Erwin Husken, Screaming Eagle, the chef who won the People's



Choice Award on the previous night, at the Chef Competition taking place at Pago Pago Restaurant, the festival's first spectacular event.

Aruba's artist community presented the sixth annual exhibition, curated by Jan van Straaten of the Westin Aruba Art Gallery.

At the Wine and Food Tasting Guests were encouraged to sample more than 60 varieties of wine by the glass from the USA, Italy, France, Australia, Chile and Argentina, offered in collaboration with the island's liquor purveyors. Excellent live entertainment by DJ Metropolis and the We Fusion band, contributed to the flawless event orchestrated by Chantal Beke, Beverage Manager & Property Service Culture Trainer and hospitality trainee Rowan Visser, of the food & beverage department in collaboration with Ramiro Rafaël, Director of Catering & Meeting Services and Food & Beverage Director Bas Olde Riekerink.



The young students, all chefs in the making, dazzled guests with their culinary talents, garnering praise and top honors for the Breast of Duck appetizer, prepared and presented by First Place Winners: Ashwin, Nicky, Alexander and Joshua, under the guidance of chef Oscar Steba.

Other distinction included, Second Place Winners with Coconut Grouper, Leandro, Tashi, Alesha and Paul under the guidance of chef Johanita Croes and Third Place Winners with Terrine of Vegetables, Evert, Ivan, Mitchel and

Derrick, under the guidance of Chef Darwin Torres. □



Links Ladies Mixed Golf Tournament



EAGLE BEACH –Last Saturday's Links Ladies Mixed Golf Tournament debuted the new look of the players, all pretty in pink, in the new 2010 polo.

A record of 20 lady golfers signed up to play, which Tabitha J. Fecunda, Island Marketing & Promotion Manager, The Links at Divi Aruba, paired with veteran golfers hailing from San Nicholas and the Links, Divine Nine, regulars.

They started at 3 p.m. and concluded the activity with prizes and awards in the late afternoon at Mulligan's Golf Café, Bar & Restaurant

Pictured here, the Links Ladies Mixed Golf Tournament winners Carola Pinxter and Juan Maduro. Libby ter Weeme, longest drive on hole #6 and Milena Solognier, closest to the pin on hole #5, collecting their prizes. □



The Chit Chat Café transforms into the Ay Chihuahua Cantina



EAGLE BEACH – The Day at La Cabana Beach monthly Cafeteria Theme & Racquet Club organized



by Los Bandidos of the Guest Relations & Activities Department under the leadership of chica caliente Greta De Cuba, featured authentic Mexican décor, from Poncho to Piniata, arriving at the second floor of the resort as the Ay Chihuahua Cantina.

The Fiesta Mexicana included an excellent south of the border menu starting with Red Bean & Corn Salad, and evolving into Xochimilco Black Bean Soup, with Nachos and Doritos, Mexican Rice, Grilled Steak, Chicken Fajita and Poblano Green Beans, with Rice Pudding & Quesillo for dessert.

La Familia of La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club enjoyed all that Mexicanidad, especially the gringo General Manager from Los Estados Unidos, Joe Najjar, who dropped in for a visit and a shot of Tequila. Pictured here the Señoritas and Muchacos practicing their ¡Ándale! ¡Ándale! ¡Arriba! ¡Arriba!, over lunch at the Ay Chihuahua Cantina. □



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Windsurfing Champion Steven Max scores at Margarita Wild Winds 2010



several prices
Against all the odds Aruba's Steven Max found a way to conquer 3rd place in a very challenging category, Slalom under 18. A great deed indeed, with his 12 years he once again was the youngest competitor. Both Sarah-Quita and Steven Max impressed everyone on the water and off, with their sailing skills, which has had its effect. A large group of enthusiastic windsurfers from Venezuela and Isa Margarita specifically, but also many from Argentina and Brazil have announced that they are going to attend our own beloved annual Hi-Winds event from the 30th of June until the 5th of July 2010. They have said to want and come and see where the Aruban athlete's learn to windsurf



so well. Let's welcome these windsurfers and make them feel at home. Hopefully they will be returning to our island for many years to come. Sadly due to lack of wind, the Wild Winds Freestyle windsurfing competitions were canceled and both Sarah-Quita and Steven Max

were not able to show off their amazing talent in the division of this popular extreme sport. In the Long distance race category 18 years and under Steven Max finished in 2nd place. Congratulations on this remarkable achievement Steven. □

ORANJESTAD - During the annual international Wild Winds Slalom and Freestyle competition in Isla Margarita this year, the air was filled with excitement. Windsurfing Freestyle/ Slalom competitors and Kite surfers from all over the globe came together to compete in front of El Yaque beach.

Representing Aruba were Windsurf World Champions Sarah-Quita Offringa and Steven Max Lageveen. The Pro Windsurfers Ben van der Steen and Peter Volwater also attended this year. Alexis Carachi from Venezuela dazzled everyone with his incredible speed as well. Local heroes Gollito Estredo and Ricardo Campello were fierce, both taking home

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La Cabana's Managers Outing Celebrates Achievement



EAGLE BEACH – La Club department heads were Cabana Beach & Racquet treated to a special outing to

the tropical Daimari Ranch, on the north-eastern side of the island.

The outing also included an tropical award ceremony in which managers Ena Vrolijk, Efigenio Dania, Ingrid Bremer and Walter Kelly, were recognized for their stellar performance during the first semester of the year. Ena Vrolijk, of Members Relations Department was unanimously voted Star Manager for the period, receiving much deserved praise from General Manager Joe Najjar for her tireless contributions to the resort. She is pictured here, under a large brimmed hat! Horseback riding and other fun games rounded up the much-enjoyed affair. □



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Why you should take the time to master a single skill

By Ranjani Iyer Mohanty

New Delhi – For most of us who never became concert pianists or even made it to mediocre, what was the point of learning to play the piano as a child? The boring scales, the silly little tunes, the hours of practice until we finally learned a song anyone recognized?

The simple answer is “not much.” But the more profound truth is that we were learning a metaskill.

Metaskills are skills needed

to learn how to learn. They are higher-order skills – like critical thinking, the ability to organize information, the strategy of building on what was previously learned, and the belief that repeated practice can make perfect, or at least result in some improvement. The principle is that in the process of learning how to do one thing really well, we learn how to learn.

So through Yo-Yo Ma’s mastery of the cello, Picasso’s immersion in art, and Einstein’s deep study of physics, they each learned how to learn. And while the subject can become an all-consuming passion, it can also form a smaller part of our lives.

The subject or topic is almost unimportant – only it’s easier and more enjoyable if we choose something we are interested in: basketball, Jane Austen’s novels, the gastrointestinal tract – the list is endless. Going very deep into one subject, learning and understanding it over a course of several years, acts as a point of reference that is useful when we learn other subjects.

The Eastern cultures have realized the value of this idea for a long time.

The daily meditation and the repetition of a mantra are all ways to train the mind, to calm it into a state of long-term focus and readiness. The old Hindu “guru-shishya” (teacher-student) relationship stretched over many years and meant the student literally lived with the teacher in order to learn, or rather absorb, his particular expertise.

German philosopher Eugen Herrigel saw the learning of any technical skill as a way to train the mind. In his classic book “Zen in the Art of Archery,” he says, “Childlikeness has to be restored with long years of training in the art of self-forgetfulness” such that the archer and the target became one. In his book, “Awaken the Giant Within,” motivational guru Anthony Robbins writes, “Most people have no idea of the giant capacity we can immediately command when

we focus all of our resources on mastering a single area of our lives.”

Even Howard Gardner, renowned author of the theory of multiple intelligences, values the attainment of a single expertise. He calls it a “disciplined mind” and explains four steps to achieve one: 1) identify an important topic or concept; 2) study it deeply over a significant period of time, using various examples and modes of analysis; 3) approach the subject in a variety of ways and from various perspectives; 4) and give performances and presentations to show true and deep understanding.

What is the value of this metaskill today?

In our present world of high speed, instant response, and multimedia, words like discipline are little used, and spending 10 years to master one skill sounds quaint. And besides, it takes time away from myriad other options we now have at our fingertips. Does learning how to do one thing really well have any economic or personal significance anymore?

David Perkins, Harvard educationalist and author of the popular article “Educating for the Unknown,” stresses that, since we don’t know what skills tomorrow will require from our children, our schools must strive to impart real understanding and the ability to apply knowledge to new situations.

Perhaps the deep learning of a single subject can provide that required general reference point to handle different and new situations, not to mention the patience and fortitude to try, try again.

In the business world, the analogous idea may be the vertical business model, which goes deep into one industry and follows the product from beginning to end. The consulting firm McKinsey & Co. encourages its consultants to build a “spike,” or perhaps it should be called a trough: a deep knowledge of a specific industry or practice. □

Haley Barbour: Oil? What Oil? Press Should Stop Scaring Tourists

Sam Stein

The biggest problem facing Mississippi in the wake of a

massive oil spill in the Gulf isn’t tarred beaches or ecological waste, the state’s governor Haley Barbour said on Sunday. It’s the national press corps, which, he asserted, is inflating the disaster’s current impact and, as a result, decimating the state’s tourism industry.

In an appearance on

Fox News Sunday, the Mississippi Republican veered as close as any elected politician could to insisting that the biggest oil spill in the history of this country had been overblown -- at least when it comes to his state.

“The truth is,” he said, “we have had virtually no oil. If you were on the

Mississippi Gulf coast anytime in the last 48 days you didn’t see any oil at all. We have had a few tar balls but we have had tar balls every year, as a natural product of the Gulf of Mexico. 250,000 to 750,000 barrels of oil seep into the Gulf of Mexico through the floor every year. So, tar balls are no big deal. In fact, I read that Pensacola or the Florida beaches when they have tar balls yesterday didn’t even close. They just sent people out to pick them up and throw them in the bag.”

“The biggest negative impact for us has been the news coverage,” Barbour added. “There has been no distinction between

Grand Isle and Venice and all the places in Louisiana that we feel so terrible for that have had oil washing up on them. But to the average viewer [of] this show thinks that the whole coast from Florida to Texas is ankle-deep in oil. And of course, it’s very, very bad for our tourist season. That is the real economic damage. Our first closure of fisheries in Mississippi waters came just earlier this week after about 45 days. So it may be hard for the viewer to understand, but the worst thing for us has been how our tourist season has been hurt by the misperception of what is going on down here.

The Mississippi gulf coast is beautiful. As I tell people, the coast is clear. Come on down!”

Barbour has been one of the most defiant skeptics about the impact of the crisis in the Gulf, comparing the spill, early on, to the sheen commonly found around ski boats. Perhaps it’s because Mississippi, so far, has yet to feel the spill’s direct affects. The first signs of oil on the state’s shores came four days ago. Barbour, meanwhile, said that there have been only two cases of oil washing up on shore.

And yet, his lack of caution or concern is notable. On Sunday, Barbour joined a growing chorus of Republican lawmakers to criticize the president for putting a moratorium on deepwater drilling in the Gulf. An investigation as to what went wrong with the BP well may not be completed. But the likelihood of another accident was statistically small, he stressed. And by the time the six-month suspension of drilling had ended, companies will have gone looking for oil off of different coastlines.

“They’ll be in West Africa, Indonesia, in China, and drilling oil wells elsewhere in the world,” said Barbour. “And the loss of production that we’re going to suffer will make us even more dependent on the Middle East, on Venezuela, on people that aren’t our friends. let me tell you one other little thing environmentalists ought to think about. The ten worst oil spills in American history, seven of them were from ships.” As for the job that the administration was doing in handling the spill, Barbour insisted that he wanted to remain above the partisan fray. After, all, he added (with a wink and a nod) what kind of politician would he be to get in the way of another’s self-destruction?

“The American people are making up their minds pretty clearly about what they think of the administration’s performance in this disaster,” said Barbour. “And I’ll let it stand at that. You know, Napoleon said never interfere with the enemy while he’s in the process of destroying himself.” □

En inicio de gira latinoamericana

Hillary Clinton elogia avances de Perú en la lucha contra la pobreza

LIMA (AP) - La Secretaria de Estado estadounidense Hillary Clinton elogió el lunes los avances de Perú en la lucha contra la pobreza, y agradeció el respaldo del gobierno peruano a la posición del presidente Barack Obama ante la amenaza que representan los programas nucleares de Irán y Corea del Norte.

Clinton inició el lunes en Perú una nueva gira latinoamericana, que incluye esta vez a Ecuador, Colombia y Barbados, y su primera actividad fue una reunión con el presidente Alan García, previa a su participación en la 40ma Asamblea General de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) que se celebra en Lima.

“Estados Unidos aplaude el progreso de Perú en materia de la inclusión económica, de la reducción de la pobreza, del aumento de oportunidades para el pueblo peruano”, destacó Clinton en un breve discurso pronunciado en inglés en el Salón Dorado de Palacio de Gobierno.

“El presidente Obama agradece enormemente a Perú su apoyo en el tema de la no proliferación (de armas nucleares), especialmente por transmitir un mensaje de unidad ante Irán y Corea del Norte, cuyas acciones representan una amenaza a la estabilidad y paz del mundo”, anotó.

Es la segunda vez que Clinton se entrevistó con García, luego de un primer encuentro

que tuvieron en Washington el martes pasado cuando el presidente peruano se entrevistó con Obama.

“En ambas reuniones hablamos tanto que nos excedimos en el tiempo acordado, porque de hecho hay tanto que Estados Unidos y Perú quieren lograr, hay tanto que nos importa a ambos”, comentó Clinton.

Señaló que ambos gobiernos están trabajando conjuntamente en la protección del medio ambiente, en la generación de energía limpia y renovable, así como también en el tema de proveer seguridad a sus poblaciones para protegerlos de amenazas como el crimen organizado y el narcotráfico. García resaltó “la emoción” que significa para Perú recibir la visita de Clinton, a quien dio la bienvenida expresando su deseo de tener más frecuentemente “su presencia como un acto ratificadorio de la amistad entre los pueblos de Perú y Estados Unidos”.

El canciller José Antonio García Belaunde declaró poco antes del encuentro entre García y Clinton, que la visita de la Secretaria de Estado permitirá ampliar y profundizar los temas que fueron abordados con Obama en Washington.

“Digamos que vamos aterrizar más, obviamente la conversación con el presidente Obama fue de temas generales, más globales, y la conversación que va tener hoy el presidente

García con la señora Clinton va a ir más a cosas concretas, específicas, muy identificadas en la relación bilateral”, comentó el canciller a la emisora Radioprogramas.

Hizo hincapié en que la agenda peruano-estadounidense no existen “temas conflictivos” como nacionalizaciones de empresas, o casos de embajadores expulsados. Tras su participación en la Asamblea General de la OEA, Clinton viajará el martes temprano a Ecuador.

La visita a Ecuador “es un reconocimiento a la importancia de Ecuador, a la democracia ecuatoriana, y al presidente (Rafael) Correa, como presidente pro témpore de Unasur”, dijo el embajador ecuatoriano en Washington, Luis Gallegos, en declaraciones al diario La Hora, de Quito. Gallegos destacó que entre los principales temas que se abordarán durante la visita están la preocupación por



La secretaria de Estado Hillary Rodham Clinton. (Foto AP/Cliff Owen)

la migración y leyes como similar que está en camino en la de Arizona y otra ley Massachussets. □

Panamá pidió extradición de Noriega

CIUDAD DE PANAMA - Panamá pidió este viernes oficialmente la extradición del ex dictador Manuel Antonio Noriega a las autoridades francesas con el fin de que pueda cumplir la condena por la muerte de Hugo Spadafora Franco, informaron fuentes diplomáticas.

El Ministerio panameño de Exteriores solicitó a su Embajada en París que presentara oficialmente la demanda de extradición de Noriega, internado en una prisión francesa desde que fue entregado a ese país por Estados Unidos el pasado 27 de abril. Será ahora la justicia francesa la que deberá determinar la suerte de esta demanda de extradición, agregaron.

Francia y Panamá no tienen firmado un tratado de entrega mutua, por lo que el Gobierno puede acceder a la entrega en función del principio de reciprocidad o negarse a la misma. □

Venezuela publica normas para plataforma cambiaria

CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuela publicó el lunes las reglas que regirán un nuevo mercado cambiario mediante el canje de bonos, con el que busca controlar un tercer tipo de cambio oficial atado a los precios de los títulos de deuda de la nación petrolera.

La publicación de la normativa en la Gaceta Oficial es el paso previo al lanzamiento de la plataforma E-bond, con la que el Banco Central de Venezuela (BCV) creará una banda de precios para la cotización del dólar alternativo y reactivará el mercado que ha estado paralizado por más de dos semanas.

“El Instituto determinará una banda de precios conforme a la metodología que estime conveniente”, dijo la Gaceta. El presidente venezolano, Hugo Chávez, ordenó intervenir a mediados del mes pasado el mercado alternativo de cambio, donde el dólar se había disparado a máximos históricos.

Chávez acusó a las corredoras y casas de cambio de especulación financiera y lavado de narcodólares para desestabilizar a su gobierno socialista.

El mercado alternativo de cambios, crucial para mantener el ritmo de importaciones en un país que compra en el exterior más del 70 por ciento de sus productos, ha estado paralizado desde el 18 de mayo y ha desatado un mercado negro donde las cotizaciones son discrecionales por no tener referencias.

No está claro cuándo comenzará a operar el nuevo mecanismo, que se llama Sistema de Transacciones con Títulos en Moneda Extranjera (SITME).

Pero la Gaceta Oficial dijo que sólo serán autorizados a operar los bancos, entidades de ahorro y préstamo y casas de cambio. Las sociedades de corretaje y casas de bolsa están excluidas.

El Gobierno está lanzando este mecanismo luego de que el “dólar paralelo” llegó en mayo a un máximo de 8,2 bolívares, muy por encima de las tasas oficiales de 2,6 y 4,3 bolívares que existen actualmente.

Venezuela aplica un férreo control de cambio desde el 2003 y devaluó el bolívar a principios de este año. □

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